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Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 6 December 2016

Mardi 6 décembre 2016



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

Greffier
Todd Decker

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For information on public safety
in your town
the following information is provided
to help you understand the various
public safety agencies
and their functions.

THE TOWN OF...
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK
The Town Clerk is responsible for
the records of the town and for
the issuance of town orders.
The Town Clerk is also responsible
for the collection of town taxes.
The Town Clerk is also responsible
for the collection of town fees.
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 December 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 6 décembre 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MODERNIZING ONTARIO'S MUNICIPAL LEGISLATION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION DE LA LÉGISLATION MUNICIPALE ONTARIENNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to municipalities / Projet de loi 68, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les municipalités.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have mixed feelings on whether I'm pleased to speak to this bill today. A week ago, the government provided us with a calendar of the final two weeks of debate in the Legislature. At that time, this bill did not appear even once, so it seemed that we had a lot of time to consult with stakeholders and research in preparation for this speech. Instead, the government called the bill three times last week, each time on very short notice. Now they have called it again this morning, knowing that the critics for municipal affairs and housing were scheduled to be at clause-by-clause yesterday until 8 p.m. on the affordable housing bill and have third reading speeches for that bill this afternoon.

When MPPs don't get sufficient notice, it lowers the quality of debate in this Legislature. It restricts our ability to contact stakeholders and local municipalities to hear their concerns—

Mr. Michael Mantha: A point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order. I recognize the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Do we have a quorum present?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): A quorum is present. Back to the member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This is a large, complex bill. It amends or repeals 16 different pieces of legislation and impacts every municipality in Ontario, which is a little concerning because as

part of their submission to the municipal legislative review, AMO said that the Municipal Act was working reasonably well and just needed some minor changes. I hope this government hasn't tried to fix what wasn't broken.

It has been over a year since the government consulted in that review, but many of the changes in this bill have been anticipated for much longer than that: They're from Justice Cunningham's judicial inquiry on the conflict of interest in Mississauga, which took place in 2011—five years ago. The government has taken their time to review these changes; it's unfair not to give MPPs and stakeholders the time they need to properly review the bill, and unfair to change the timing for debate on short notice. We deserve, and the municipalities and the people of Ontario deserve, to have a proper, well-researched debate.

In fact, when I reached out to stakeholders in preparation for this debate, they were surprised it was being debated already and said they were still in the process of reviewing the bill. Are the last-minute changes to the legislative schedule a sign that the government is trying to put the opposition at a disadvantage? Is it the sign of a government that doesn't want us to have sufficient time to bring forward the problems in this bill? Or is it simply incompetent planning? I will leave that to the members of the public who are watching to judge.

While I'm not pleased about the government's action, I'm pleased to speak to this bill because of the amount of time and effort that our municipalities spent to get it right. The government likes to talk about the fact that they received 350 submissions to this bill. I just want to remind everyone what that means. It means that hard-working people in our municipalities took time away from their regular duties to research, prepare or approve these reports. It means individuals took the time, after they got home from work or on the weekend, to write and share their concerns. It means that municipal organizations took the time to consult with their members, pull together the best ideas and send them to the government.

I think it is a credit to all those municipalities, individuals and organizations that we see their work reflected in this bill. I want to thank all of those who shared their work, not only with the government, but also with me in my office. I look forward to hearing from them again to see whether the government's proposal has addressed their concerns and implemented their suggestions correctly or whether they missed the mark.

But one of the first concerns that I want to raise is about something that is not in this bill, and that is the direct election of regional chairs. It isn't in this bill

because the government instead included it in a finance omnibus bill that was introduced on the exact same day.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 68, the municipal omnibus bill and Bill 70, the finance omnibus bill actually amend the same sections of the Municipal Act: 218 and 221. If this bill passed first, Bill 70 would actually repeal the changes to section 218 that Bill 68 just put in place. That would be in the ordering number, Mr. Speaker; of course, 68 would be first.

Let me explain that for the people at home. It's like the Ministry of Municipal Affairs has sent out a construction crew to 218 and told them to build a garage behind the house. On the exact same day, the Minister of Finance sent out a construction crew to 218 and said, "Rip down all the buildings on the site and build a new house." If the finance construction crew gets there first, everything will work out fine, but if the municipal crew gets there first, then the finance crew will rip down the brand new garage.

Unfortunately, most people already believe the government is that disorganized, that one ministry doesn't know what the other one is doing. This seems to prove them right.

I think that the people of Ontario deserve better. The government should not be inserting major municipal changes in a finance bill just because they can force it through more quickly and with less scrutiny. If they are proposing that level of change, they should take the time to get it right and to properly consult with the people in all the areas that are affected.

The regional councils of Niagara and York have both recently voted on direct election of the chair, and both councils decided against it. Muskoka sent a submission to the government as part of the municipal legislative review, and there's no mention of directly electing a regional chair.

I think they deserve an opportunity to speak to the committee and explain why they didn't believe it was the best option for their community. Was it to protect the level of representation for smaller communities? Were they concerned about the size of the raise? Those are questions that could have been addressed in the committee on this bill. Or, if the government wanted to give municipalities more time to implement the change, it could have considered it as part of Bill 181, the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, which this Legislature just passed on June 7 of this year.

Niagara's regional chair wrote a column pointing out that Niagara regional council recently held votes on both the direct election of the chair and whether to have an integrity commissioner. Now the province is overruling both of those decisions. He said, "These votes of council clearly represent the will of Niagara residents that elected each of these councillors to represent you in your communities."

Going on with the quote: "This week, the Minister of Municipal Affairs has put forward new legislation which, if passed, would see the provincial government reverse the decisions of your local representatives and force a

one-size-fits-all approach on Niagara region and our communities.

"Each Ontario municipality should have a right to determine how it is governed. That decision should not be dictated in a top-down way from Queen's Park."

0910

Bill 181, the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, is a perfect example of what happens when you rush ahead with legislation without thinking it through and listening to the public. Not only did the minister and the government reverse themselves during the process of the bill on issues like union and corporate donations and whether paid labour counted as a donation, now less than six months later, in Bill 68, they have introduced significant changes to the contribution levels for candidates and third-party advertisers; they have increased from \$750 to \$1,200. The amount that an individual can contribute to their own campaign has increased to \$25,000, despite concerns raised by presenters last spring that this would give wealthy candidates who can afford to finance their own campaign an unfair advantage.

For Bill 181, the government told us that they had received 3,400 submissions. In fact, during the debate, the parliamentary assistant for municipal affairs and housing said, "I know that AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, had an opportunity to give us input on this. The concept of where we wanted to go was presented. They were expecting it, because it's something you do after every election. There were some 3,400 inputs from municipal leaders and members of the public on what this should look like at the end of the day."

If they read those submissions and took the advice they received at the time, how does the government explain that they have changed their minds less than six months later? In fact, when we debated Bill 181, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines said, "What we are proposing, Mr. Speaker, is a framework to regulate third-party advertising to increase accountability for advertisers and ensure more fair and more transparent support, including setting contribution and spending limits."

If the changes in Bill 181 were about being more fair and transparent, what are these changes that are being snuck in through a municipal omnibus bill less than six months later, Mr. Speaker? What are they trying to hide? The government may say that the changes in this bill are to reflect the new provincial contributions in the Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act. That would be a good argument except that the government had introduced the Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act before we did the clause-by-clause on Bill 181, the municipal elections bill, last spring.

So the government had the opportunity to amend that bill to make it consistent, and they chose not to. I specifically remember that the elections bill was introduced before clause-by-clause, because I did move an amendment to try to make the two bills more consistent. I moved an amendment that would have made paid labour a campaign contribution under the Municipal Elections

Act, as it is under the new Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act. Despite the fact that it had just been introduced in a government bill, the government members on the committee voted the amendment down. I notice that they didn't introduce anything in this bill that would address that problem either.

Last spring, we had people who came to committee and spoke about self-funding campaigns. They raised concerns that it would lead to economic inequality and increased risk of illegal donations. At the end of the process with the bill, they loudly congratulated the government on steps they had taken to make municipal elections more fair and transparent because the government put a reduced level on it. Now, less than six months later, the government is undoing some of those changes.

I would like to know what the government had to say to these people who came out in the spring and spoke at the committee and then went out and talked about the positive changes. Are they just hoping that these people just won't notice? Again, I will leave that to the people at home to judge whether the government did this on purpose or whether it's just a government that is disorganized and has no plan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give another example from this bill which raises a similar question. This bill contains a clause which allows councillors to participate in meetings electronically. We have some concerns about that, but what is really concerning is that the government said it is for rural and northern communities where weather might prevent councillors from attending the meeting, and then they included the amendments to the City of Toronto Act as well. Do the government members think that Scarborough and Etobicoke are rural?

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the last time this government tried to put this change into the Municipal Act, I was in committee when their own members accidentally voted it out during the clause-by-clause.

I also find it interesting that during the municipal election legislation review, most of the discussion about electronics focused on ways to increase public participation, such as broadcasting meetings live, and yet none of those changes appear in this bill.

In fact, despite the fact that the government claims this bill is about transparency and accountability, they are putting forward a change that would make council meetings less transparent. Currently, members of the public can go to meetings and clearly see who is speaking and how they are voting. If the government had done their research on this issue, they would have found that there have already been issues with granting this ability in other jurisdictions. Port Moody recently rescinded their municipal bylaw, which allowed electronic participation at council meetings, after two different councillors tried it on separate occasions and both had technical difficulties. The council considered spending \$45,000 to upgrade their teleconferencing abilities, which resulted in outrage from their residents. One letter to the editor said:

"I was outraged to learn of Port Moody council's experiment with councillors 'attending' council meetings by Skype. Why?

"First, our city councillors are paid well to participate in their civic duties and responsibilities. I think attendance at city council meetings is their top priority where citizens with issues may 'see the whites of their eyes.' Face-to-face interaction is crucial."

The letter went on to say, "Residents with disabilities are expected to drag themselves to council meetings to speak to issues. I would be more sympathetic if the remote conferencing was being provided for our disabled and shut-in residents to participate in council meetings."

In fact, a number of municipal submissions to the legislative review suggested that electronic participation should only be allowed for people with accessibility challenges. Allowing people to simply call in to a meeting will make it far less transparent.

There are no requirements in this bill for video-conferencing or other steps to make sure that the public will still be able to hold their representatives to account. As the town of Richmond Hill said in their submission, "In order to allow the opportunity for the public to participate and understand the decision-making of council, it is important that these meetings take place in an open and transparent manner. Attendance at these meetings is part of this process as it allows the public to come face to face and interact with the decision-makers in their community."

The submission from York region acknowledged that extensive use of technology to facilitate attendance may erode the principle of accountability and transparency.

It's clear that the government hasn't thought this change through. In a briefing, the staff couldn't even answer whether someone calling in to the meeting would count as absent or not. If this provision was truly intended for exceptional circumstances, such as extreme weather, then it should count as an absence to ensure that it cannot be abused.

Other jurisdictions, such as British Columbia, have put in restrictions around electronic meetings to ensure transparency and accountability. These include ensuring there are facilities so the public can fully watch and hear all participants in the meeting. If the government wants to allow electronic participation in meetings, why aren't these measures included in the bill? Do they not truly care about transparency? Or is it another instance where the government just hasn't done the proper research?

Mr. Speaker, I want to raise another section of the bill that will cause challenges. This bill gives a municipality the right to enter land adjoining property owned by or occupied by the municipality, for the purpose of maintaining or making repairs or alterations to the land owned or occupied by the municipality. There's no permission required. In fact, there isn't even a requirement for the owner of the property or the tenant to be notified. To be clear, this is not emergency work. This is maintenance, repairs and alterations. There's no reason that the owner of the land could not be informed and have the opportunity to object.

In a briefing we were told that there was a requirement for notice, but in fact, if you read the bill, there is no

notice requirement. If you read the current Municipal Act, there's a section which gives the municipalities the authority to give landowners access to a neighbouring property for maintenance and repairs. That section has a notice requirement that applies to the neighbouring landowner, but it doesn't apply to the new section of this bill at all.

Once again, it's not clear whether the government believes that the people don't deserve to have notice that someone will be entering their property, or whether they simply didn't take the time to realize that it wasn't included in the bill. I know that there will be people who will question why this notice matters; they picture a city employee walking through their backyard and wonder why it matters. But let me give you an example of the challenges this creates.

0920

On farms in my riding of Oxford and across Ontario, biosecurity is a big concern. Visitors to the farm can be required to have clean shoes, clean clothing and clean vehicles, including tires and undercarriage. In fact, this government has spent millions on biosecurity measures, such as truck-washing stations to help stop the spread of diseases like PED and avian influenza. Biosecurity has become a concern for grain farmers as well. Yet there is nothing in this bill that would stop a municipal employee going from farm to farm without taking any precautions.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' website says, "Visitors can unknowingly bring harmful agents onto a farm via contaminated clothing and footwear, equipment and vehicles. Equipment used to repair buildings and machinery, to treat or handle animals, and to carry out testing or procedures are all potential sources of contamination. The risk is increased with visitors who regularly go from farm to farm as part of their employment or routine." It goes on to say, "Visitors must be prepared to accept all reasonable directives from the farmer when visiting his or her operation" and that, "All visitors should make an appointment so that both parties can make best use of their time. The visitor should ask the farm operator about his or her biosecurity protocol and any special measures that must be taken."

Mr. Speaker, if we have one government ministry investing millions in biosecurity and telling all visitors that they should make an appointment, and another ministry telling municipal employees they can access private property with no notice and no requirement to contact the owner, I think we would all question whether that was appropriate.

I'm also concerned by a change in this bill to subsection 255, which removes the requirement for a municipal auditor to approve the length of time that a municipality or local board must retain records. Based on the track record of this government, I think we have seen why it is important to have an independent person involved in decisions on how long records should be kept. The argument has been put forward that the municipal auditor has primarily financial expertise and therefore is

not the appropriate person to approve the retention period. I understand that argument, and moving the approval to another authority would be a solution, but I think having an independent authority makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps even the government doesn't have confidence that they have researched this bill properly, because one of their changes is to add additional regulation-making authority to deal with problems or issues arising as a result of the amendment or repeal of an act, or a provision of an act, under this bill. So anything that may be wrong that they haven't researched, this bill gives them the right to correct after the fact.

One of my concerns is not with what is in this bill but with what is not in it. I want to take a few moments to point out some of the things that municipalities requested that we don't see in this bill.

While I'm happy to see that the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act is finally being updated, it's disappointing that the government waited five years after Justice Cunningham released a report from his judicial inquiry called Updating Ethical Infrastructure before they addressed these changes. I want to point out that while they have addressed some of Justice Cunningham's recommendations, there are some that are not included in this bill, such as identifying a source of funding for inquiries by municipal integrity commissioners, and a term of office or tenure, that do not appear to have been addressed. It's difficult to have an independent officer whose job is to investigate if there are inappropriate actions by members of council, and yet that person serves at the will or pleasure of council.

Another thing that is missing is any action to address the problem of joint and several liability. This was a request from a number of municipalities and municipal organizations. As you know, currently, if a municipality is found 1% at fault for an accident, they can still be held accountable for the full cost. As a result, municipal insurance rates are increasing exponentially.

As we all know, at AMO in August 2011, Premier McGuinty promised municipalities a solution was coming. Two months later, there was a provincial election. Afterwards, the government seemed to forget about the commitment and failed to take action, so the PC member from Perth-Wellington brought forward a motion in the House which said that the Ontario Legislature "should protect taxpayers from higher property taxes by implementing a comprehensive, long-term solution to reform joint and several liability insurance for municipalities by no later than June 2014, addressing the alarming rise in insurance premiums due to rising litigation and claim costs."

In February 2014, in response to that motion, the now Minister of the Environment and Climate Change said, "There's not much to debate, Mr. Speaker, in this particular motion because we agree with it. It's already well in progress. We're working with" the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and Rural Ontario Municipal Association "to a solution."

In the same debate, the now Minister of Transportation said, "I think this is the kind of matter that deserves

greater discussion and greater analysis, and I hope that it will be supported by members on all sides.

"The other thing I would mention is that in those delegations, in those conversations that I had with folks from municipalities representing the north, the south, the east and the southwest of this wonderful province that we call home, there was broad recognition that under the leadership of the current Attorney General and current Premier, there have been some very fruitful ongoing conversations about exactly what needs to occur here to make sure that we get it right."

Mr. Speaker, just to remind you, that was the year of the election which took place on June 12. About two months after the election, municipalities went to the AMO conference in London and were shocked to hear the then Attorney General announce that the government would not be proceeding with joint and several liability reform.

With this bill, the government has missed another opportunity to address the problem. In their submission for the municipal legislative review, the city of Mississauga put forward a number of options to address the problem, including the Saskatchewan model. Under this model adopted by the province of Saskatchewan in 2004, if there is a shortfall because one defendant is insolvent and the plaintiff's own negligence contributed to the injury, the shortfall is divided among the remaining at-fault defendants and the plaintiff, in proportion to their fault.

The multiplier model: If there is a shortfall because one defendant is insolvent, the municipality is never liable for more than two times its proportionate share of the damages.

Or the combined model: Where a plaintiff is partially at fault for their own loss, the Saskatchewan model could be applied first and then, if needed, the multiplier model could be applied to ensure the municipality would not be liable for paying more than two times its proportionate share of the damages.

For years, municipalities have been promised action shortly before an election only to have the province back away from their promises afterwards.

The Ontario Good Roads Association put forward a reasonable request to have the Attorney General set up a working group comprised of representatives from municipal government, provincial government and the Law Society of Upper Canada. If the government isn't ready to address the problem in this bill, they should at least move forward with that working group and start trying to find solutions.

Addressing joint and several liability isn't the only thing the government has missed in this bill, Mr. Speaker. A number of municipalities, including Mississauga and Vaughan, asked for clear municipal authority to regulate the sharing economy, but it also appears to be missing from this bill.

AMO and a number of municipalities recommended that councillors be required to take accountability training within the first 90 days of taking office, similar

to the training they are required to take under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Again, it appears to be missing from this bill.

This bill also fails to address the request from the Municipal Finance Officers' Association and the association of municipal clerks and treasurers that municipalities be allowed to exempt conservation authority land from municipal taxation as long as it is managed and controlled by the municipality for park purposes. As they point out, this would allow municipalities to avoid current situations where the conservation authorities levy the municipality to get the money to pay municipal taxes. It would cut the red tape and the expense of having the municipality's funds go from the municipality to the conservation authority and then right back to the municipality.

This power is not new. It already exists in section 451 of the City of Toronto Act. The Municipal Finance Officers' Association simply recommended that the power to avoid red tape be expanded to all municipalities, but that change does not appear in this bill.

I wonder about priorities when there are seven amendments in this bill to change references in legislation from "February 28" to "the last day of February" to deal with leap years, but nothing to deal with these legitimate requests from the municipalities and AMO.

0930

One of the other municipal requests is a regulation, so it wouldn't be expected in this bill, but given that the government has not given us any indication that they will address it, I want to highlight the concern: the heads-and-beds rate. As you know, Mr. Speaker, this is the amount that municipalities charge universities in lieu of taxes. The rate of \$75 per student has not been updated since 1987, almost 30 years ago. As the mayor of Hamilton said in a recent article, "Our position continues to be that the current heads-and-beds rate does not reflect fair compensation.... By our calculations, if indexed to inflation, proper funding would see an increase from \$75 to approximately \$135 per head/bed."

We all know that municipalities are already struggling to make ends meet, and outdated rates like this one make it even more difficult. We will be watching to see if the government takes their advice and updates it, because already we have seen that this bill will cost municipalities more.

The government is rushing through a huge volume of legislation which impacts municipalities. Each one is a burden on municipalities as they try to participate in the consultation process and stay atop of the proposals to point out any unintended consequences, and each one results in more lasting costs for municipalities.

For instance, this afternoon, we will be debating Bill 7, which dumps new responsibilities for enforcing residential property standards bylaws on municipalities, as well as the cost of implementing inclusionary zoning bylaws and enumerating homeless people. Under this bill, all municipalities will have a number of new costs, including being required to have an integrity commis-

sioner. A recent survey by the AMCTO found that 67% of municipalities don't currently have an integrity commissioner. So while it is positive for councillors and members of the public, we need to acknowledge that it is also an additional cost for two thirds of the municipalities. They also have to create a registry of conflicts of interest—again, a new cost, and again, no new provincial funds to offset these requirements.

Two years ago, staff at the city of Thunder Bay prepared a draft code of conduct, but council didn't vote on it. According to the city clerk, council didn't reject the content of the proposed code so much as its financial implications. The clerk said, "The issue was more around the fact that having a code of conduct means you then have to engage an integrity commissioner, so there were concerns around the expenses that might arise from that. It wasn't about the content of the code itself." Now the Minister of Municipal Affairs, their own MPP, is forcing them to take on that cost.

In their submission, York region pointed out that they had not passed a code of conduct because 18 out of 20 of their councillors were already subject to a code of conduct in their lower-tier municipalities, and being subject to two might cause ambiguity.

We have also heard concerns that this bill prescribes codes of conduct for local boards as well as councils. This is a concern, because municipalities don't have legislative levers to control local boards, so this change may leave municipal councillors responsible for the accountability of local boards without any powers to make them more transparent or accountable.

While there are concerns that it has been expanded too widely in that direction, we also heard that it should be expanded within the municipality to cover both council and staff. When this issue was first proposed, the warden of Wellington county said, "If we need one, we can always get an integrity commissioner, but to have one on staff, or one we have to pay a retainer, what do we need the expense for? ... I think it's a bit of overkill myself."

He made the point that municipal governments are already transparent because they are right in front of the people all the time in a small town. As a result, many of these well-intentioned rules will simply become an extra layer of government and bureaucracy.

In the committee presentations to the Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act, the CAO of Middlesex county talked about hiring an ombudsman and pointed out that the cost to the municipality is not just the time the person is actively investigating. There are additional costs, such as training, that begin right away.

The cost for the integrity commissioner is in addition to the new costs for the direct election of regional chair that Peel, Niagara and Muskoka are being forced to take on, against the objections of many of the councillors.

As Mississauga mayor Bonnie Crombie said in a recent article, "We need to know whether or not there will be increased costs to taxpayers to administer the election process for a directly elected regional chair and how much staffing and administrative costs will increase

to support someone representing well over one million people at Peel council." According to the article, she suggested the new law may affect Mississauga's decision to remain in Peel.

This government continues to add more and more burdens onto municipalities. Each new requirement and report takes additional staff and additional money. Repeatedly in this Legislature I have challenged the Minister of Municipal Affairs to review the forms and paperwork for municipalities and remove at least one for each new burden they add. Now that we have a new minister, maybe he will take up the challenge and try to reduce that burden. We can only hope.

Last year, I filed an order paper question asking the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide a list of all the reporting requirements for municipalities. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the government knows the answer because what they sent me back didn't contain a number or a single report.

When we are looking at how the provincial government has increased costs to municipalities, one that often gets overlooked, but is significant, is the cost of hydro. I heard from one small municipality that they are paying \$1,000 a day for hydro just for their long-term-care home—\$1,000 a day.

The city of Oshawa received a bill for more than \$150,000 to keep the street lights on in June 2015. Of that, only about \$3,600 was for electricity; over \$60,000 was a global adjustment charge and the rest was delivery, regulatory, debt retirement charges and HST.

Owen Sound recently went public with a bill they had received for 13 street light accounts over a one-month period. For 13 street light accounts over a one-month period, the cost of electricity was just \$442, but the total bill came to over \$10,000 due to nearly \$5,000 in delivery fees and a \$4,360 global adjustment charge. That is a huge additional cost for municipalities that were already struggling to make ends meet and supply all the services that their residents want. They are costs that end up getting passed on to residents through increased property taxes and user fees.

Mr. Speaker, we have all heard the stories of people in our ridings who are struggling with the high hydro rates: People who are paying hydro bills that are higher than their mortgage; people who are choosing between buying food and paying their hydro bill.

Recently, I heard from a man who said that after he paid all his bills, the only groceries he could afford for a week was a single loaf of bread. I heard from a couple who had dealt with the increasing cost of living by selling their house in the GTA and moving to my riding so they could use the profits of the house to live on—incidentally, that was a good decision—but hydro and the cost of living in Ontario continue to increase, and now they're wondering what to do. Should they sell their house in Oxford and move to a more remote community where housing prices are lower?

Mr. Speaker, it isn't fair that these people are paying the high cost of hydro twice, once in their own home and

again on their municipal property taxes. It's an urgent problem for our residents and our municipalities, but this government and this bill do nothing to solve it.

The mayor of Oshawa suggested the province help people, businesses and municipalities by removing all the additional fees on hydro. Instead, he and all other municipal officials are getting additional costs under this bill, Bill 7 and Bill 70, and those are just the bills that we are dealing with currently. As this government is putting more and more burdens on municipalities, it is even more important that we ensure they are getting an opportunity for input.

I want to take a few minutes to talk about some of the changes that they have asked for which are addressed in this bill, the first being that prudent investor standards are being expanded to all municipalities. Originally, these investment options were only available to the city of Toronto, and municipalities had asked for them to be expanded. I understand that this government continues to dump more and more costs onto municipalities and that their budgets are stretched. We hope that these additional investment tools will allow them to generate better returns from their investments.

Another one of AMO's requests was to shorten the so-called lame-duck period. This is the time between the election of a new municipal council and when they are sworn in. However, AMO requested that the municipalities have flexibility on the date that the first meeting takes place. They recommend that the first meeting be fixed to take place within a range of 18 to 39 days after the election, allowing individual municipalities to set their council dates within that time, with the current date of December 1 as the latest limit. I look forward to hearing their response to this bill and whether they think the government's proposal is sufficient.

0940

We're happy to see that there will now be a range of penalties available under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act to make sure that the penalty is appropriate to the situation. We're also happy to see that there is now a definition of "meeting," as municipalities, AMO and the Ontario Ombudsman all requested. I look forward to hearing feedback on the new definition, which includes that a quorum of members must be present and "members discuss or otherwise deal with any matter in a way that materially advances the business or decision-making of the council, local board or committee." That would be considered a meeting. I have a concern that there is no definition of "materially" and that this may leave the new definition open to interpretation and challenges, but I hope that is something that will be addressed during the public consultations.

This bill adds four additional reasons that a meeting may be closed to the public, including "information explicitly supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board by Canada, a province or territory or a crown agency of any of them...." It seems like an odd addition from a government that said the bill was about transparency. I know that the previous Ombudsman had concerns

about the number of reasons this government allowed meetings to be closed, and I look forward to hearing the opinion of our current Ombudsman on these new reasons.

Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, 350 municipalities, municipal organizations and individuals sent in submissions on the municipal legislation review. I am looking forward to hearing from them about where this bill hits the mark and where changes are needed.

One thing that municipalities talk about often is their uniqueness and the need for legislation to be flexible enough to work for not just large cities like Mississauga and Hamilton, which have enough staff to be aware of what is happening at Queen's Park, but for small communities like Conmee that are already struggling with everything that this government has downloaded on them. We need to make an extra effort to hear from those small communities. That means giving them enough notice about the committee hearings, and it means travelling outside of this building.

I met with the Lakehead Rural Municipal Coalition, which includes six small municipalities. They said, "If the province is truly interested in the effect of proposed legislation on small municipalities, it needs to consult with municipalities of 5,000, 1,000, 800 or even 200 people. While we understand that not every municipality's concerns can be captured, the province should not be writing legislation without truly knowing its effect on everyone."

As I said at the beginning, there are a lot of organizations that worked hard on the municipal legislation review to put forward good ideas and recommendations for this bill. I am pleased to see some of these ideas incorporated, but as always, the details matter. This government has a track record of rushing legislation through, which results in mistakes, and based on how they have brought this bill forward for debate so far, it looks like they're doing it again.

I'm going to ask the minister and all the members on the government side to put the needs of municipalities ahead of themselves to make sure we are debating this legislation in a way that allows all members to bring forward constructive comments and suggestions. Have public hearings with enough notice that people who have concerns can come and raise them. Have enough time between public hearings and clause-by-clause that we can put forward amendments based on those hearings and actually consider the amendments put forward by the opposition and third party.

An organized government with a plan doesn't have to rush everything through to get things done. Giving people and organizations sufficient notice of committee hearings doesn't have to slow the process down. It simply requires a government that can look more than a week ahead. Plan out the agenda so that while the committee is considering one bill, they're aware of what is coming next and notifying the public.

Having time between public hearings and clause-by-clause doesn't have to slow the process down. It simply means having a plan so that the committee can do other

work in between. It is what a competent, organized government would do, and it results in better consultation and better legislation.

As Oxford county said in their submission, "Considering that the Municipal Act and Municipal Conflict of Interest Act are both important pieces of municipal legislation that have a significant influence on the way the county of Oxford develops its local bylaws, policies and operating procedures, it is important to ensure that proposed changes be appropriately considered."

I would like to hear from the regions on the sections that require them to review the number of members for each lower-tier municipality.

I also want to hear from the public on whether they think one public meeting is sufficient for that process. I have concerns that some of our regions cover a large area with diverse communities, and that results of a single meeting in Mississauga or Caledon, for instance, might not be representative of the views of the entire population.

This used to be a government that boasted they wanted to have conversations. Today, they seem to measure their success instead by how quickly they can force changes through. In a few days, we will begin a winter break. I'm looking forward to taking some of that time to meet with stakeholders to talk about the changes in this bill and see where it addresses their concerns and where it misses the mark. I'm looking forward to hearing from municipalities at ROMA, and, after the Legislature returns, hearing from them at Good Roads.

When we return, I expect that members will be able to report back on the concerns their municipalities have. I hope that the government will give them the opportunity to do that.

As I mentioned, later today we will be debating a housing bill, Bill 7. When that went through the committee process, the government was more focused on how quickly they could get it through rather than on getting the best results. People who were presenting at committee were notified on Friday afternoon that they would have an opportunity to present on Monday. It was the same approach the government took with the municipal elections bill last spring. Now, less than six months later, we are debating this bill to amend the Municipal Elections Act again.

We need to take the time to get it right. That doesn't just mean enough hours of debate. It means fair and reasonable notice of committee hearings so the presenters aren't just limited to organizations who can afford to have someone monitoring the Legislature. It means giving people enough time between being notified that they can present and the date of the committee so that they can do a proper presentation. It means having enough time between the public consultation and the clause-by-clause that members of all parties actually have time to consider the concerns raised and to draft amendments based on them. It means having enough time between the clause-by-clause and third reading that MPPs

can actually read the new version of the bill and comment on whether it works or doesn't.

This afternoon, not only are we debating a bill less than 24 hours after clause-by-clause; we are debating it before the new version of the bill is even printed. It is unfair to ask MPPs, especially those who weren't in committee, to comment and vote on a bill when they haven't seen what amendments were accepted and which ones were voted down. In fact, this required unanimous consent, because the standing orders clearly state,

"Amended bill reprinted

"(b) When a bill has been amended in any committee it shall be reprinted as the Clerk of the House directs, amendments being indicated, and shall not be further proceeded with until it has been reprinted and marked REPRINTED on the Orders and Notices paper."

Mr. Speaker, for Bill 68—and, frankly, all bills—the government needs to do better. We need to manage the legislative calendar so that MPPs and members of the public can have real input. That's how we avoid the type of mistakes that have appeared in recent legislation, such as the need for Bill 68 to amend legislation that was just passed last spring.

I understand that how the government manages the schedule in the Legislature probably isn't a big concern of the people at home, but it is part of a broader issue of government mismanagement. People have certainly felt the impact of the government's mismanagement of the hydro system. I recently launched a petition calling on the government to address the cost of hydro, and it has now been signed by almost 6,000 people. I still receive emails almost every day from people struggling with their hydro bills. People are scared of winter because they don't know how they are going to be able to afford to heat their homes. That's the result of government mismanagement.

At AMO last year, one of the big issues that municipalities raised was hydro. They talked about the impact of high prices. They also talked about the reliability of supply, which they say has gotten worse as our rates have gone up, not better, as this government claims. They talked about businesses that have lost days of production or sales because of power outages. They talked about businesses that were ready to invest but can't get the electricity they need.

0950

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the same concerns from individuals. Not only are they all paying much more, but the reliability is worse. One person in downtown Toronto said her power has gone off more often this year than any year she can remember. They have lost two modems due to power surges and now have batteries in all their clocks because they had to keep resetting the time. Just like the problems we have experienced here in the Legislature with Bill 68, these are all signs of government mismanagement and the lack of a plan.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning, there are a lot of municipalities, municipal organizations and individuals who took time to contribute to the municipal legisla-

tive review. I want to thank them all for their efforts, and I look forward to hearing their comments on this legislation and working with them to try and make it better.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I didn't know we were going to be doing questions and comments this morning. I thought my good friend from Oxford was going to take his full hour and we wouldn't have time this morning. However, that being said, I want to compliment the member. He did an excellent job on this bill and he did an excellent job speaking this morning, as he did yesterday when we were in committee hearing delegations on a bill that we'll be speaking on later this week.

Basically, I see this as a housekeeping bill. It certainly ties up a lot of loose ends that have been out there for a while. I think I counted five or six pages in here that deal with nothing but forfeiture of property, if somebody passes away without an heir and that property ends up in the care of the crown. They have tightened up the rules and regulations on how to make that work better.

To me, I guess, as a former city councillor, the thing that really jumps out at me in this bill is that they're changing the time for municipalities that want to put properties that are in tax arrears onto the tax registry so they can be sold off. It used to be three years. That time limit will now be two. They're shortening that time period which would, I guess, be an incentive for more people to actually pay their municipal taxes.

Right now, people know, as they're trying to pay their ever-increasing hydro bills, put food on the table and clothes on their children's backs, that they can put off paying their property taxes for three years. Well, no more. Once this bill comes in, you will only be able to do that for two years before the municipality can register your property and sell it off from below your feet.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to respond to the comments of my critic, the member from Oxford. Before I do, though, the member from Windsor-Tecumseh just spoke briefly for two minutes and described this as a housekeeping bill. I would say it is much more significant than a housekeeping bill. I think there are several significant component pieces in this legislation that have landed very well with the municipal sector and, should it pass, will be well received by all people right across the province. It's much more significant than a housekeeping bill.

On the consultation piece, my critic spoke a little bit about that and suggesting, of course, that there was a lack of consultation. Of course, I disagree strongly with that. There was significant consultation when it came to the preparation of this particular legislation, dating back to 2015, not just this year. It began under my predecessor, Minister McMeekin, when he had the file.

It's also interesting to hear about consultation from my critic when it comes to the municipal sector, when we all

remember very well that there were forced amalgamations of the municipal sector, many of them would tell you with little or no consultation at all. It's a very, very serious issue, forcing municipalities to amalgamate without any consultation. I'm not sure how much more serious a policy position you could take than forcing municipalities to amalgamate without any consultation. Anyway, on this particular piece of legislation, I would suggest there was significant consultation.

Finally, there was a reference in his remarks to downloading. Costs associated with being at the municipal level are significantly reduced in terms of their burden since we came to government in 2003. We have been uploading costs out of the municipal, property, residential, commercial and industrial tax base since we came into government in 2003. Many of those costs were downloaded and put into people's property tax bills as a result of policy positions that were taken by the previous Conservative government. It's remarkable to hear anybody suggest that we have been putting costs onto the backs of residential property taxpayers. In fact, it's just the opposite: We've been taking costs out from their tax base.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure, obviously, to join in the debate today for Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act. I'm very pleased to follow our critic and my friend and mentor, the member from Oxford. He has been doing this particular work as critic for municipal affairs for many years, in and out his critic portfolio, so he does have a profound understanding.

He also came to this Legislature—he arrived here, I think, 20 years ago—with a substantial background in municipal politics. So I think I'll take what he says, as opposed to what the minister says, seriously when he talks about downloading, when he talks about consultation, when he talks about the frustration from stakeholders. I'll take his word for it.

He did talk a little bit about energy and he did talk a little bit about people's bills. There was one thing that I think we need to talk about. It affects everyone here, it affects our municipalities. It was when he said that after all the bills were paid, this one individual he knows could only afford a loaf of bread.

Speaker, you're well aware of my work over the past decade—11 years, actually—with food cupboards in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton. I've raised tens of thousands of pounds of food. This year in particular, I'm very, very concerned, not only with the high price of hydro impacting people's ability to put food on the table. Last week, our Christmas parade in Barrhaven was cancelled due to very bad weather, very high winds. It was actually a food drive for the Barrhaven Food Cupboard. I was just notified that they're in a crisis situation: 220 families in Barrhaven rely on this food cupboard. In our municipality, in the great city of Ottawa, that is quite serious.

I'll be doing a breakfast this Saturday to try and get some food in there, but you know something, Speaker? It's getting tougher and tougher, and oftentimes it's our municipalities who are on the front lines of those challenges.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to be able to join in the conversation this morning and to appreciate clearly the investment, passion and commitment of our friend from Oxford, the critic on this file, who spoke at length this morning about Bill 68, the Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act.

I appreciate any opportunity to learn about new things. I don't come out of municipal government, and many of us in this room have, either because they have served or they have followed it very closely. With a bill like this, where we are fine-tuning, updating, where we are making some significant changes—some of which have been asked for for a long time, others that municipalities are going to have to make adjustments to—I'm glad to hear from the government, of course, that there was consultation, but always we know on the opposition benches that it was never enough consultation or it could have been more appropriate consultation, especially when it comes to the public piece, the public consultation. We know that our friends and neighbours in our communities really do have a lot of thoughts and opinions on where they live and what needs to happen with their municipal government.

When we're talking about integrity commissioners and codes of conduct, certainly our municipalities and our councils have important opinions on that, but so too do those who come and sit in our council meetings. I know that they will be glad to see some of these changes. I know that they also would have appreciated weighing in on them.

I'm never going to stand up and miss a chance to talk about hydro and the cost of hydro. That's something that certainly for my municipality and our mayor and our council—they gave me a hydro bill when I was collecting them, to know the pressures on our municipalities. That is something that this government really needs to be listening to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Oxford for final comments.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, Oshawa, Nepean–Carleton and the minister for their comments.

I think the one issue I just wanted to delve into a little bit was the issue of consultation. I'm not suggesting that it didn't—and I think, in my remarks, I pointed that out. All these items have been discussed ad nauseam for the last 10 years. The Cunningham report was five years ago, so, obviously, some of these things have been on the agenda for five years.

1000

I just want to point out the issue of consultation. The final phase of a consultation, Mr. Speaker, is the com-

mittee hearings. Now, we had committee hearings on Monday. All the people came in to talk about—now that they've seen the bill, they come to talk about what they think the changes are that should be made, and what they like and what they don't like.

Two days later, the amendments are due. That's two or three days—I don't know exactly how long, but it wasn't very long. The opposition, having listened to that, we have to prepare amendments and get them in to the Clerk by the deadline just a few days hence. Then they go to committee, and then the committee time is cut off. We can only debate about half of them, and for the other half, the amendments are just read by the Chair of the committee and voted on, up or down, but with no further debate.

The reason I point that out is that this was the only time there was time for debate on the actual bill and what needed to be changed and what didn't. But the government did not allow time in the committee to do that. Not only was that cut short, as I said in my notes, but the bill is not yet printed and we're going to be debating it again this afternoon for third and final reading, also time-allocated, Mr. Speaker.

That's not what you call full and wholesome debate and public consultation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's always a pleasure to be called upon by you in this House to stand up and bring forth the voices of my constituents in Windsor–Tecumseh. I look forward to that opportunity.

This is an interesting bill that the Minister of Municipal Affairs has tabled. I want to thank the minister. He arranged a meeting, a briefing, for me. It was actually last week on the last day of November.

I said it earlier, and I'll say it again: A large part of this bill is housekeeping. There are five or six pages in there dealing with just one issue, and that's on the forfeiture of private property if somebody passes away without an heir. There are a lot of loose ends that had to be tied up in that area, so if there are 33 or 35 pages in the bill, five or six of them deal with that one issue, for example. I agree with the minister: It's a much more substantive bill in other areas, but a good portion of it was tying up some loose ends.

I guess, to me—and I've said this already—one of the biggest changes I see in here, as a former city councillor, is the length of time that taxpayers have before their property is listed as in arrears and subject to forfeiture and a tax sale. It used to be three years. Now, it will be two. I believe the municipalities asked for this, because it would be an incentive for more people to pay their taxes in a more timely fashion. I take it that my friends in the municipal sector told the government they would like to see this change because, I assume, they're having a problem getting their tax money in on time.

I know that back when I was on city council in Windsor several years ago, we started working with tax-

payers in arrears, on various alternative options. We encouraged them to seek alternative financing arrangements. We went out of our way to establish a payment plan that would work for them, and a registration was used only as a final resort.

This year in Windsor, about 100 properties have been registered. Okay, Speaker, the actual number is 98, but about 100 properties have been registered. In recent years, though, we were seeing 200 properties a year.

So I'm told by senior officials in the finance department at Windsor city hall that we will see 1,450 additional properties come up for registration next year. That number may appear staggering, but I'm told that many of those owners have already started making payments of some kind or another. They're trying to make up for the unpaid taxes that they haven't put in there in the past few years.

Unpaid taxes are a debt owing to a municipality. Speaker, as you know, unlike the provincial government, municipalities can't run a deficit. If the bill for unpaid taxes is too high, the rest of the taxpayers have a problem. They will be expected to make up the difference, or money in municipal reserve accounts will be siphoned off and used to cover the unpaid taxes. Obviously, that money will be replaced, one would hope, at some point in the future when either the taxes are paid by the owner in arrears or by the new owner who picks up the property at a tax sale.

There is no harm in asking why. Why would so many people in Ontario have a problem paying their municipal taxes? Well, for one thing, I know, from speaking with people in my riding and people who come into my constituency office, that because of the escalating cost of hydro in recent years under this Liberal government, they're having problems paying their taxes. People are telling me they're paying more now for an annual hydro bill than they're being charged on their municipal taxes. That should frighten us.

Juggling your bills, including those for putting food on your table, means you could put off your bill on your property tax for as long as three years. That was then. After this bill, it will be two years. Of course, hydro is a different matter. As you know, Speaker, you have to pay your hydro or your electricity will be shut off. You used to have three years to get caught up on your property tax bill. Now, you'll only have two. This is a major change. My guess is that social activists will be letting their municipal councils know of their displeasure with this change.

Money is tight for most of us here in Ontario these days. Many of the jobs that are available don't come at the same rate as all of the manufacturing jobs we've lost. They don't come with the health and pension benefits that many people used to have. Many of the jobs that have been created are only with part-time hours. So it's understandable, I guess, that our municipal partners are feeling the crunch. They must have told the government that they needed this change. Of course, my municipal buddies will probably tell me that all the blame is on the

province. That's just the way it is. Nobody wants to accept the blame.

This bill wasn't shopped around very much. As I understand it—and I know my friend the minister will correct me if I'm wrong—since 1953, the Municipal Act has been updated every 10 years and always—always, always, always—has there been a public discussion about those changes. Public hearings were held. Delegations made presentations in public. I'm told that, for the first time ever, this was not the case with the amendments to this bill. For some reason, I'm told, only written submissions were accepted.

Of course, the usual suspects were brought in, the associations that are involved with municipal governments in one way, shape, form or another. They were brought in and asked for input. That is a good thing. But as for Joe and Josephine Public, they were nowhere to be seen. Their views were not asked for. They were not recruited to tell the government what opinions they may have on the way municipal governments do their business. That is too bad, because you can go to any Tim Hortons, any barber shop or hockey rink—municipal taxpayers have opinions, and they don't mind sharing them.

The private consultation on the bill, by the way, was held over a few weeks during a small window in the summer when the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games were being held, so there was little or no media coverage about it.

Now, it can be argued, especially by a critic for municipal affairs, that the City of Toronto Act and Ontario's Municipal Act are among the most significant pieces of legislation affecting the lives of all of us here in Ontario.

Municipalities are still struggling to deal with the downloading forced on them by the Mike Harris Conservative government. Some \$3 billion in service costs was dumped on the municipal laps and forced onto the municipal tax base. This started the landslide that turned Ontario into a have-not province. Municipal revenue streams have been constrained. Provincial legislation still limits their ability to deliver downloaded services.

Speaker, that leads to what I see as a failure in this bill. The Wynne Liberals missed a golden opportunity here to establish a level playing field for all 444 municipalities in Ontario. They could have given them the option, as they did for the city of Toronto, for more taxing options. Nobody likes to pay taxes. Nobody likes to pay even more taxes. But as a senior, mature order of government, municipalities know best what to charge and how to levy that tax in the best interests of their municipal taxpayers. Speaker, if they screw it up, if they overcharge, if they lose the confidence of their taxpayers, they won't be re-elected.

We only have to look across the aisle for evidence of that. Hydro rates will be the albatross of the Wynne Liberal legacy. That's not me saying this; that's what the pollsters are saying. I know the pollsters have been wrong before. But the polls show Premier Wynne is at the lowest level ever recorded for a Premier of Ontario.

Some days, her approval rating is at 13%; some days, it's at 14%. She'll have a long way to go to ever be taken seriously as the first choice for most voters in Ontario.

Selling our electricity system was a major mistake. Not stopping the sale in the face of public opposition was another major miscalculation on her part. Polls show that way more than 80% of the public in Ontario are opposed to her selling off our publicly owned hydro system.

If the polls are right and don't change much at all, her political coattails won't be long enough for many members of the class of 2014, who came into office when people had a different view of the Premier.

She has been a major disappointment to many of us. Her credibility is in shambles. She has let most people down. She told her Liberal friends at a private conference that she made a few mistakes. She said she was sorry for that—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I just want to remind the member to address your comments specifically to the bill. I'm getting the feeling that we're beginning to waver a bit. I would just ask that you bring your comments back specifically to the bill. Please continue.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I was getting to that. Thank you for the reminder.

If the polls are right—this bill deals a lot with municipalities. Municipal governments have already opposed the sell-off of hydro. Municipal politicians know what's going on with the sell-off of hydro and how the rates are causing them problems in their own municipalities when their people can't pay their bills. They can't pay their tax bills because the hydro bills are too high. Now municipal governments have asked this government to allow them, for people in tax arrears, to put their homes up for forfeiture after two years instead of three, as an incentive for more people to pay their municipal taxes. Because of the cost of hydro, people are saying, "I've got to pay my hydro bill or they'll cut it off. I can put off paying municipal taxes for a couple of years." All I'm saying is, the reason for that is staring us in the face.

We'll see the knives sharpened, if the polls are right and she's going down and they're going down with her. When they realize their political livelihoods are at stake, we'll see the knives sharpened over there.

You can fool some of the people some of the time, Speaker, and maybe fool a few people all of the time, but—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 10:15, and this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests? The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. You sound good today.

I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome all the pharmacists who are here from the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Have a pleasant day. President Sean Simpson is here; the president of the Canadian Pharmacists Association, Carlo Berardi; and Dennis Darby, CEO of the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Welcome, everyone who's here. Have a great day.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I in particular want to welcome Brandon Tenebaum from my own riding of Parkdale–High Park, here with the Ontario pharmacists. Welcome.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm also pleased to welcome the Ontario Pharmacists Association to Queen's Park today, including Dennis Darby, the CEO; Sean Simpson, the board chair; and Deb Saltmarche, who is from my riding of St. Paul's. They're hosting, of course, a reception in committee rooms 228 and 230 this evening, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., and all members are welcome.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's my pleasure to introduce members in the gallery who are here for the tribute for the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. They include a veteran of the Battle of Hong Kong, Private Fred Cooper, and his family; Patricia Turcotte and Mike Babin, of the Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association; Larry Lau and retired members of the Hong Kong regiment; Brigadier-General K.R. Cotten, commandant of the Canadian Forces College; Lieutenant Commander Scott Harrold and Chief Petty Officer Lawrence Doucette of the Royal Canadian Navy; and representatives of the 48th Highlanders, the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Military Institute and the Wounded Warriors.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take a moment to recognize some folks we have here today from the Yes I Can nursery in Don Valley West. These are several representatives from the families and parents: Marcela Cruz, Marcia Paulos, Amelia Bruno, Sam Stemer, Eddy Gelbart, Wilhem Hart and Rebecca Katzman.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd also like to welcome the folks from Yes I Can nursery. We have Janet MacDougall here with us today, and I see Laura, Bruce and Clara McIntosh from the Ontario Autism Coalition in the gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome the family of my legislative page, Adrian Rassaf. In the east members' gallery, we have his father, Mehdi; his mom, Sabine; and his sister Erika. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Julia Munro: This morning, I have the honour to introduce a constituent, Fred Cooper, a veteran of the Battle of Hong Kong. He is accompanied by his son Ron and his daughter Dianne. Please join me in welcoming them to our assembly.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to welcome Mr. Timothy Brady, from Brady's pharmacy, in Belle River and in Essex, who is an OPA board member. He's also my dad's pharmacist, and I'm told he likes dealing with my dad, which is kind of weird because it's my dad, and he's weird. Thanks.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It is my honour today to welcome the mother of page captain Eric Pei, Mrs. Zhou, who is joining us here in the members' gallery.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to welcome Mike Cavanagh, who is a board member of the Ontario Pharmacists Association and has a pharmacy in Lindsay in the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Welcome, Mike, again.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It is my pleasure to introduce a board member of the Ontario Pharmacists Association from Niagara Falls, who is here with us today. Connie Beck, welcome to Queen's Park. Also, my friend Sean Simpson, who is president of the Ontario Pharmacists Association and also my pharmacist. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Please join me in welcoming Chetan and Anu Tukrel from Richmond Hill and their son Anmol Tukrel, who is a student at Holy Trinity School in Richmond Hill. He has developed software, called iDentifi, which helps people with impaired vision to identify things and objects.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would also like to recognize, from the Ontario Autism Coalition, Bruce McIntosh and Laura Kirby-McIntosh.

As well, some additional parents from the Yes I Can Nursery School are joining us today: Cheyenne and David; Andrea and Bobby; Bill Hayes; Jan Burton; Bryan Ceresne; Karen Stermer; and Viet Dang.

Welcome.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to welcome Michael Cairns today. He was my first volunteer in my first campaign, and he has been with me every campaign since. Welcome, Michael.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome Willem Hart from my great riding of Thornhill. Welcome to Queen's Park again, Willem.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: We're joined today by Linda Pryutla, who is a member of the Ontario Pharmacists Association. She's joining us in the lobby today.

Also, page captain Henry Klinck is serving today. He's joined by his parents, Terra and Mike Klinck. His brother Jeffrey Klinck is with him. He has even brought his grandmother Rhea Jobin; his grandfather Jim Gilise; his aunt Yuri Strong; his uncle Scott Strong; and his cousin Lili Strong. All the Klincks and Stronges are here today.

Welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's rare that we have, on occasion, someone from Nepean-Carleton join us at Queen's Park, but today my former boss, current constituent, all-time good person and head of the Ottawa Senators Foundation, Goldy Hyder, is here. Welcome, Goldy.

Hon. David Oraziatti: I'd like to introduce Allan Braidon from Sault Ste. Marie, who is here today for the Ontario Pharmacists Association lobby day.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'm delighted to welcome, from Burlington, the grandparents of page Henry Klinck: Rhea Jobin and James Steadman. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome, from my riding, local pharmacist Chris Jordan. Chris is the director-at-large of the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Welcome to Queen's Park, Chris.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to welcome Caitlin Yeo and Thomas Vaughan from Queen's University, who are working with CAHO on the NaviKnife; Jim Flett, the CFO of KGH; Jenn Goodwin from Providence Care; Vincent DePaul, who's a physiotherapist from Queen's University; Catherine Zahn from CAMH; and Gwen Burrows and Michael Salter from SickKids hospital. All are here from CAHO. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I would like to welcome delegations from the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario, led by Dr. Catherine Zahn, who is a professor in neurology and the president of CAMH, as well as Karen Michell, who is the executive director for CAHO. Please join me in welcoming them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd also like to welcome a pharmacist, Eric Morrison, from Beaches-East York; Tatum Wilson, a constituent, with the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario; Stewart Wong and Azadeh Kushki, who are scientists at Holland Bloorview working on autism supports; Lydia Hanson, Susan Cosgrove and Michelle Stegnar—who is a parent at Holland Bloorview, who's working with that organization.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, Tatum Wilson is here.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear ribbons to commemorate the École Polytechnique massacre and the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbons. Do we agree? Agreed.

I almost thought I heard a no.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: A second point of order, Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you. I also believe you'll find we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence before question period in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the massacre at École Polytechnique in 1989.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The minister is seeking unanimous consent for a moment of silence. Do we agree?

I will delay that until I am finished with all other points of order and introductions.

The member from York-Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to pay tribute

to our veterans and the dedicated Canadians who fought and died in the Battle of Hong Kong, as we near the 75th anniversary, with a representative of each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Munro is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

We'll do so just before question period.

Any further introductions or UCs?

Seeing none, just before we do both of those issues, I want to thank the members for sending me the Halls and whatever it is you've been sending me. I appreciate that. My voice is not strong, but I just want to let you know that I still know how to do the job.

We will now do the moment of silence for those who were massacred. I would ask everyone to rise and pay homage to those individuals.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Pursuant to a long-standing motion, the flag is flying at half-mast.

At this time, I now call upon those representatives to bring comments. The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

BATTLE OF HONG KONG

Mr. Monte McNaughton: On behalf of the leader of the official opposition, Patrick Brown, and the entire PC caucus, I am humbled to pay tribute to the brave Canadians who fought and died 75 years ago in the Battle of Hong Kong.

Of the 1,975 citizens who answered the call to service in Hong Kong, more than 1,050 were either killed or wounded in battle. The staggering cost of defending against the illegal Japanese invasion meant that 554 Canadian defenders of freedom would not return home to their loved ones, 290 of them being killed in battle and another 264 who spent their final years in deplorable conditions as prisoners of war. For those who survived, the physical and mental scars of battle would serve as an eternal reminder of the scourge of war.

Just as in the Boer War of 1899, the Great War, battles of World War II, and in Korea, Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq, the brave Canadians who sacrificed so very much in Hong Kong did so in service to country and in defence of the values of freedom and democracy. Eighteen of those courageous men remain with us.

The Legislative Assembly is honoured and privileged to have one of those fine few here today as our special guest. Born in October 1919 in Toronto, Frederick Arthur Cooper enlisted with the Royal Regiment of Canada at the age of 21 and transferred to the Royal Rifles soon thereafter to perform guard duty. Then the orders came to deploy for the Pacific.

Mr. Cooper landed in Hong Kong on November 16, 1941, and on the day after Christmas, only a few months after enlisting, he was taken by the Japanese as a prisoner of war. He would remain a prisoner of war for almost

four years, labouring in the most difficult and trying conditions, forced to construct the runway in Kowloon, building cargo boats at Yokohama and toiling in the coal mines in northern Japan.

Mr. Cooper, thank you for your bravery and sacrifice during those many years.

You have honoured the service and memory of your brothers in arms by sharing their story with the next generation of Canadians in the many Remembrance Day addresses you have given over the years.

For all that you have done, a grateful nation is forever in your debt.

Today, we contemplate the heavy price that the Battle of Hong Kong demanded from our country in the Second World War. As we have seen in every battle in which Canadians have fought and died, the Battle of Hong Kong serves as yet another example of the courage and spirit of the Canadian Armed Forces.

That fight in the Pacific offers us many stories of courage. Brigadier J.K. Lawson, the man in command of the West Brigade, exemplified the fighting spirit that characterizes our soldiers. When the Japanese had Brigadier Lawson's headquarters surrounded on December 19 and were firing on the position at point-blank range, he radioed command to let them know that he was going to "fight it out." He emerged from the shelter armed with a pistol in each hand and died with Canadian courage and bravery on full display.

In that same spirit of self-sacrifice, Company Sergeant-Major J.R. Osborn put the needs of his country and fellow soldiers ahead of himself. When the Japanese began lobbing grenades at the Canadian position, he chased them down one by one and hurled them back. When he spotted an incoming grenade that was too far away to throw back, he shouted a warning and hurled himself on top of it, killing himself but saving his fellow men.

For every tale of heroism, there are countless untold stories of the bravery and spirit of our soldiers in the Battle of Hong Kong. Despite our contingent being split in two, and in the face of insurmountable odds, they fought on. Isolated and outnumbered, our Royal Rifles and Winnipeg Grenadiers fought with everything within them in the defence of Hong Kong, but in the end, it was simply too much. On Christmas Day, 1941, after holding off the Japanese for 17 long and arduous days, the fight was over and Hong Kong finally fell.

Those who survived the war returned to help make Canada stronger: men like George MacDonell, who would later become a deputy minister in the Ontario government and who, at age 94, due to ill health, is not able to join us here today.

On behalf of the leader of the official opposition, the entire PC caucus and grateful Ontarians across the province, I would like to say thank you. Thank you to the families of the fallen, who shoulder more of war's burden than the rest of us. Thank you to all those who proudly wear the Canadian Armed Forces uniform today. And thank you to all those who sacrificed so much in Hong Kong in December 1941.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tributes?

Mr. Paul Miller: On behalf of my leader, Andrea Horwath, and the NDP caucus, I'm honoured to stand today and speak to the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong.

Not a month ago, we marked Remembrance Day. Every town in this great province was marked in the last century by war. Few communities were spared the loss of a son or daughter. Most lost several; some lost many more.

Hong Kong was the first of Canada's battles in the Pacific theatre. It would not be the last. The Canadians who defended Hong Kong came mostly from small towns in Manitoba and Quebec, but some were from Ontario.

One of the veterans of Hong Kong is here today. As my colleague just before me mentioned, I would like to recognize and honour Frederick Arthur Cooper. Frederick served with the Royal Rifles of Canada, which stood alongside the Winnipeg Grenadiers in the defence of Hong Kong. Thank you for being with us today, Frederick.

Today, we honour and commemorate the living and the dead from that battle. For many, today is not just a day of honour. It is a day of profoundly mixed feelings: a day of honour, yes, but also of mourning, of deep humility and of grief for lost loved ones and fallen comrades.

In the fall of 1941, Canada sent two infantry battalions to reinforce Hong Kong against a possible war with Japan. Hong Kong was isolated from other British outposts and almost impossible to defend from a Japanese offensive.

1050

The assault on Hong Kong began on the same day Pearl Harbour was attacked. Truly, it was a date that will live in infamy. A small garrison of 14,000 soldiers, mostly British, Canadian, Indian and Chinese, faced on onslaught from 52,000 Japanese troops. They were outnumbered four to one. There were no Allied reinforcements; there was no relief. There was no prospect of escape, yet they refused Japanese requests to surrender. Only when their position was overrun did they lay down their arms—if they did at all—before the formal surrender on December 25.

The victors of the battle were brutal in the aftermath. Imperial Japan treated its prisoners of war atrociously. It paid no heed to human rights or to the Geneva Conventions. Those who were there know, and I don't have to say any more.

The defence of Hong Kong was desperate. It was bloody. But it was also courageous. Against impossible odds, the Canadians and Allied troops held out for almost three weeks—incredible.

The Canadian soldiers who so valiantly defended Hong Kong were all volunteers: 290 were killed in the battle; almost 500 were wounded; 267 later died in captivity as prisoners of war. Many of those brave volunteers are buried today in Hong Kong at the Sai Wan Bay War Cemetery or the Stanley Military Cemetery. Still others

who survived the battle, but not the war, lie in Japan in the Yokohama British Commonwealth War Cemetery.

Those volunteers—our veterans—made great sacrifices for Canada and for our freedom, but it's hard for any of us today to appreciate just how high the price of liberty was. More than 47,000 Canadian men and women never returned home from the Second World War.

My friend Peter Kormos once said that it's old women and men who declare war; it's young women and men who fight them. And they were so young, the men and women in Hong Kong. Today, we remember each and every one of them. We remember those who never returned from this expedition to Hong Kong; we remember those who did return also.

Time takes a toll on all of us, including our veterans, but those who still stand with us stand proud. As the memory of those terrible wars fades into the mist, it is more important than ever that we remind our young people and future generations of the immense sacrifices of those times. Never forget, so that never again.

John F. Kennedy, a veteran himself, said, "No man who witnessed the tragedies of the last war, no man who can imagine the unimaginable possibilities of the next war, can advocate war out of irritability or frustration or impatience." We honour the men and women of Hong Kong in our prudence, in our commitment to peace, in our hand of friendship to every one of our brothers and sisters. At the same time, we honour them in our resolve to defend what was won at such great cost: the promise of freedom, opportunity, equality and dignity for every Canadian.

Those of us in this place have a special responsibility to honour all our veterans of all ages, to treat them with the dignity and respect they have earned. Our veterans should never live their senior years in hunger or want. We owe our veterans a sacred trust—a trust we may never break, on pain of our own eternal dishonour. Their bravery and their sacrifices offered each of us the opportunity to speak here today. Speaker, lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Hon. Jeff Leal: On behalf of Premier Wynne, our cabinet and our colleagues, I want to take a few moments this morning to remind the House of a monumental, historic moment in our country's history.

This Thursday, December 8, marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong, also known as the Defence of Hong Kong. Just hours following the attack on Pearl Harbour in Hawaii, the Japanese 38th division set their sights on the British crown colony of Hong Kong. It was left to two Canadian battalions, the Winnipeg Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada from Quebec City, to defend against an onslaught of experienced, battle-hardened Japanese soldiers in what was the first land battle Canadians fought during World War II.

Neither battalion was at full strength during this time in 1941, nor were they adequately trained for the demanding level of warfare which they faced. In fact, the ship carrying their heavy equipment from Vancouver was diverted to the Philippines.

The Japanese forces outnumbered the Allies, comprised of Britain, Canadian and Indian forces, nearly four to one. Despite the limited resources and training that the Canadian battalions received, they fought with valour against overwhelming odds, in a manner that makes us as Canadians extremely proud each and every day. From December 8 to December 25, 1941, almost 2,000 Canadian troops fought bravely. By the time Britain had surrendered on Christmas Day, 290 Canadians had been killed. An additional 264 Canadians perished over the next four years as a result of the conditions found in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps.

I'd like to ask that you now please turn your attention to the Speaker's gallery, as we are honoured to have an esteemed guest with us this morning in this Legislature, veteran Frederick Arthur Cooper. Mr. Cooper enlisted in the Royal Regiment of Canada in July 1941 at age 21. He then transferred to the Royal Rifles of Canada for guard duty. He took part in the Battle of Hong Kong and was then taken prisoner on December 26, 1941. Mr. Cooper spent three years and eight months in a Japanese prison camp.

After a courageous journey following the war, Mr. Cooper returned to home to work for Beamish Construction and married the love of his life, Delilah Stephens. After 71 years together, Delilah passed away this past February at the age of 97. Together, they had six children, and were blessed with ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Over the years, Mr. Cooper has taken the time to visit schools and share his life-changing experience as a Hong Kong veteran at Remembrance Day events. He was honoured to have spoken during his tour to Hong Kong in 2010, where he laid a wreath for the Sutton Legion's remembrance ceremony on behalf of Hong Kong veterans.

Mr. Cooper was among more than one million Canadian men and women who served in Canada's armed forces during the Second World War. More than 42,000 Canadians gave their lives in that war.

I had the opportunity in April 2015, along with my colleague the Honourable Michael Chan, to lay a wreath at the Sai Wan Commonwealth cemetery. And, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that there is nothing more moving. I have had the opportunity twice in my life to lay a wreath, once at Agira at the Canadian cemetery in Sicily, and then the second time in Hong Kong.

That morning, along with Minister Chan—and I know Premier Wynne has also laid a wreath at that cemetery—as I prayed at each of the stones, I came across two stones that will forever be etched in my memory. Mr. Speaker, I don't mind telling you that I started to cry. I stopped at the gravestone of one Elroy George Dupont, son of Oscar and Ida May Dupont of Pembroke, Ontario. He passed away at age 19 on December 24, 1941. When he signed up in September 1939, he was 16 years old—never again to experience a Canadian sunrise and a Canadian sunset.

The second one I stopped at was Joseph Michael Whalen, son of Frank and Agnes Whelan of Kirkfield,

Ontario. He passed away as a prisoner of war on November 20, 1942. The reason I make note of this one is that Joseph was the uncle of a current deputy mayor and city councillor in the city of Peterborough, Dan McWilliams.

I'd also like to note Brigadier Lawson, who was the commander there, of course. There is a room in our consul general's office in Hong Kong named after Brigadier Lawson. With the odds running against him and with no ammunition, he led one last bayonet charge to defend his headquarters. He was killed in that action.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach the holiday season with the rising of this Legislature this Thursday, it's tremendously important that we reflect on the battles fought by our fellow Canadians. That way, we reflect on those monumental times to ensure that the values which we hold dear can be held and appreciated for generations to come.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their very heartfelt comments.

Sir, for yourself and for your comrades who were left behind and those who are here: You exemplify the word "hero." Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Again, I thank all of the members for their very kind and heartfelt comments on this anniversary.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Life is already too expensive in Ontario. Families can't afford another tax, and that's exactly what the tolls on the Gardiner and the DVP will be.

The Premier has the ability to stop these tolls. In 2011, the Premier, as Minister of Transportation, did just that. She said she would not support the tolls. The Premier should follow that in 2016. Will the Premier stop the tolls on the DVP and the Gardiner?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition is the leader of a party that has a long history of not respecting municipalities, of not working with them in partnership, and of taking unilateral action against the will of municipalities. In fact, many of us, myself included, are in this House today because of that kind of action on the part of that party.

It is disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition hasn't learned from those actions, but it's not surprising that the Leader of the Opposition, who has no plan for building transit or for building transportation infrastructure in this province and no plan for where the funding would come from, and who doesn't really seem to care about those investments, would be calling on to us take unilateral action against the city of Toronto. We're not going to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: In 2011, the Premier was happy, as Minister of Transportation, to say no to the city of Toronto on tolls. Now, all of a sudden, the Premier is saying yes to tolls, yes to taxing our roads. Why? Well, for 13 years, the Liberal government has allowed our infrastructure to crumble. Why? Because the Liberals have wasted millions on shady contracts—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Okay. I'm actually not quite sure how I'm going to handle this, because my voice is normally loud enough to get your attention. What I am going to ask you is, let's just keep it down at least one notch so that I can still participate if I need to.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Liberals have wasted millions on shady contracts and bonuses to Liberal friends. They've wasted billions on scandals and mismanagement. Frankly, the Auditor General's report said it was complete incompetence when it came to managing infrastructure dollars.

Now, the Liberals have quietly said to the city of Toronto, "Because we've shortchanged you on infrastructure, we'll let you put this toll on." But the solution to their mistakes is not a tax, a tax, a tax. That doesn't work for commuters in the 416 and the 905.

My question to the Premier is, rather than making drivers in the 416 and 905 the target for your mismanagement, to pay for your mistakes, do the right thing and say no—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think the most important question to be asked of the Leader of the Opposition—you know, in the last couple days, I have rhymed off the list of all the projects that our government is investing in currently in every corner of the province. I think it's only fair—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My request goes both ways, and it's not helpful when members are answering the question and somebody from the same side is still heckling. I'd like to ask all of you to keep it down.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, as I was saying, I think it's only fair for the Leader of the Opposition to be straight with the people of Ontario and to let us know here in this Legislature: What project would he kill first? I think the most important question for that leader is what project—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right, all right. Stop the clock.

I'm going to be straight with you. The member from Leeds-Grenville will come to order. And if I continue to hear this, we'll go to warnings.

Finish, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, would it be the extension of GO trains to Niagara or Bowmanville? Would it be 15-minute, two-way all-day GO service? Would it be LRTs in Toronto, Peel, Hamilton? Would it be BRTs in York region or Durham? Would it be new streetcars in Toronto?

The list is endless. I think the people of Ontario deserve an answer from that leader. What project would he kill first?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is to the Premier, and I know the Premier is uncomfortable in answering this.

The reality is, these tolls in Toronto are not going to be popular with 416 commuters or 905 drivers. It's the wrong thing for the GTA.

And I know the Liberals heckle and say, "Where are you going to get the \$200 million that these tolls would bring in?" You know what, Mr. Speaker? If you weren't building upside-down bridges and paving roads every two years instead of every 15 years, then you'd have the money for infrastructure. But because of this government's incompetence on managing infrastructure dollars, there is no money for infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear: You stop Liberal waste and mismanagement, and you don't need Liberal tolls. Will the Premier do the right thing and stop these tolls on GTA commuters?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's evident from that question that the leader of that party has no plan to invest in transportation infrastructure. Speaker, I have to tell you, as anybody who watched that person's career in Ottawa for a decade would know, it's not a surprise to learn that there is no plan coming from that leader. It's not a surprise, but it is disappointing. It's clear that that leader doesn't want to own up to the fact that he would kill transportation projects in every corner of the province.

But I have a quote from another Ontario politician, a quote given in 1996 from then Premier Mike Harris. That quote said, "There will be ... tolls for Highway 407 when it is open.... It is like a tax for those who are using the road."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton will come to order, and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to go to warnings.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The DVP has been built.

Sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In mid-sentence.

We're moving to warnings.

Finish, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, not only did a Conservative Premier talk about tolling Highway 407; that same Conservative Premier—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That same Conservative Premier, that same leader representing that party, then sold that highway and killed the Eglinton subway. And to this day, those transportation decisions continue to haunt the people of this province.

We won't make that mistake. We won't let that happen again.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

This is the time in which some of you are going to gamble with getting a warning: when I'm standing. And it doesn't matter where you sit in the House.

New question.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Since I can't get an answer from the Premier on upside-down bridges or new tolls in Toronto, I'm going to try something different, directly to the Premier, on the growing skills gap in Ontario.

I have heard stories from across the province, from workers who don't have the necessary training and from employers. They need skilled workers desperately, and they just aren't there.

The Auditor General, in the report, said, "The ministry does not collect or analyze"—

Interjections.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: There's a skills gap in the Conservative caucus.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

The Minister of Transportation is warned. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned. Anyone else?

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The AG said, "The ministry does not collect or analyze" the necessary information on the labour force and skills demand to determine which jobs face a shortage of skilled workers. Instead, this government is preparing to set young people up for failure and no jobs.

1110

Mr. Speaker, why is the government failing our young people? Why are they not addressing the skills gap in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development is going to want to comment on this, but let me just say a couple things. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I agree that there is more to be done in terms of linking the labour market with the labour force to make sure that young people, as they go through school, have a knowledge of what the available

jobs are, and that the jobs that are available and the employers that are looking for people have access to the institutions. That has always been the case with colleges. We are working right now to give young people more opportunities to have work experiences, to make sure that they know what is available and to have those skills infused into the education system.

But Mr. Speaker, having said all of that, the number one reason that businesses come to this province and expand in this province, and I have heard it over and over again, is our highly skilled workforce.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier—and it's interesting that the Premier would not respond or answer the concerns raised by the Auditor General. I will rephrase it again.

The Auditor General says Ontario spends more than \$1 billion a year on employment and training programs without proper information about where the skilled workers are needed and where they will actually be needed in the future. The government used to claim they support evidence-based policy, but this just seems to be photo ops in terms of when it comes to using young people but not actually delivering the skills training they need.

The Auditor General has made this very clear. And it's one thing to thank the Auditor General; it's another thing to actually listen and ask. We have a serious skills shortage in Ontario. I travel the province and I hear about employers who can't get the young people for the jobs that are available today and tomorrow.

So once again to the Premier: Will you actually listen to the Auditor General? Will you address the skills gap, rather than more of the same?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition, but we understand that there is more to be done. To the Auditor General's report, I'm not just thanking the Auditor General for the report, although I do that, but I recognize that there is more that needs to be done, which is why we are already taking action.

If you look at the highly skilled workforce report that we have received, we are already taking action with companies like Siemens, where there are pilot projects, students, young people having a work opportunity, making that link between the workforce and our educational institutions. That is the kind of work that is ongoing. We recognize that there is more to be done. We continue to make investments to make that linkage and to provide the data, to make sure that the data is available. Unlike the party that the Leader of the Opposition was part of, we believe in data. We believe that there should be continuous data—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, rather than an answer, I got an attack on the other party. What I'd actually appreciate is an answer, for a change.

The Auditor General pointed out we have a serious problem with youth unemployment. Actually, where has the Liberals' record of 13 years got us? The youth unemployment rate is now hovering at 15% and training programs only get one third of the users to full-time employment. This is a serious question that deserves a serious answer.

In 2009, the government said youth unemployment was a post-recession hangover. Here in 2016, and thanks to this government, we're leading Canada in youth unemployment. I'm not willing to accept that. I want action from this government to deal with the skills mismatch. Our young people deserve better from the government. Will the Premier actually listen to the Auditor General? Will she address the skills mismatch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I want to say thank you to the Leader of the Opposition for finally turning his attention to this issue, because I can tell you we have been working very hard, starting with the Premier's expert panel on the highly skilled workforce. If he was doing his job, Speaker, he would know what we are doing. He would know that we are moving toward replacing the Stats Canada that he cut. He cut Stats Canada labour market information—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Just to provide you with an example, the Minister of Children and Youth Services is warned and the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock is warned. The next step is naming.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I invite the Leader of the Opposition and any member of his caucus to come in for a briefing and we will describe exactly what we are doing. Part of what we are doing is fixing the gap left when the federal government cut Stats Canada, taking away precious labour market information. We need that information. We're going to get that information. We are acting on it. I'm very serious when I invite the Leader of the Opposition to actually get informed about what is happening, because it is fantastic.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Since last spring, we've been asking the Premier to end hospital overcrowding. The auditor reported that any hospital that is filled to 85% is overcrowded. When a hospital is overcrowded, it leads to more infections. That means instead of getting better, going to an overcrowded hospital could actually leave you sicker. More than half of Ontario's hospitals are overcrowded.

New Democrats uncovered documents showing that in the Ministry of Health's own words, "The ministry does not have standards, guidelines, policies or best practices with respect to hospital bed occupancy."

Will the Premier end overcrowding in our hospitals and create a policy for occupancy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, I thank the Auditor General for her focus on hospitals and providing us with a pathway and very solid advice in terms of how we can continue to make improvements. But, Mr. Speaker, she also acknowledges the substantial progress that has been made in the service delivery that is provided, a fact which is acknowledged by third-party entities across this country as being among the best, if not the best, in the entire country.

The Auditor General points to the fact that approximately 90% of individuals who go to our emergency departments are seen and discharged within the provincial and national target times. Of those who do require admission to hospital, we are making critically important investments to address the capacity issues: \$140 million in additional operating funds announced just in the last couple of weeks. I'm happy to talk more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Kingston General Hospital has been overcrowded since 2012, and Kingston isn't alone. Ontario's Auditor General has confirmed that 60% of Ontario's hospitals are overcrowded. How many people in Kingston have been treated in a hallway or ended up with an infection due to hospital overcrowding because of Liberal government cuts and underfunding?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud of the investments that we're making in Kingston. In fact, we just announced a planning grant to expand the capacity and the ability of those hospitals, on a go-forward basis, to provide the services that are required by those in that community. In Providence as well—a substantial new investment, a major capital investment. I know the member from Kingston, I think it might have been yesterday, made the announcement on the substantial completion for that hospital.

We are making incredible investments: \$12 billion over the next 10 years so that we can continue to upgrade hospital facilities, so that we can address capacity issues on an ongoing basis where they occur. But we make those substantial investments, an additional almost half a billion dollars in operating costs this year alone for hospitals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: London Health Sciences has been over 100% capacity for the last two and a half years. The Liberal government doesn't even admit that overcrowding exists, but anyone who has been to London Health Sciences has seen it first-hand, and Liberal underfunding of hospitals is only going to make things worse.

Does this Premier know how many people in London were treated in a hallway and how many got an infection because they were in an overcrowded hospital in London?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That's why London Health Sciences is among the hospitals which is receiving a

substantial investment, almost \$3 million of additional operating funds that I announced just in the last couple of weeks for London for them to address those capacity issues. And that's in addition to \$345 million that was announced in the budget, the budget that they voted against, the budget from the spring, which provided an additional allocation for operating funding. But, Mr. Speaker—

1120

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that they hate it when I refer to their actions, but it bears repeating that in the brief period of time in the 1990s when they were in power, they had sufficient time to close 24% of all the acute hospital beds in the entire province, and they closed 13% of all the mental health beds in the province.

I'm not going to take my advice from that party.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Yesterday, I asked about Glow Juicery in Hamilton. The cost of hydro means that Jesse, the company's owner, might have to shut her doors.

It's not just new businesses that are facing this kind of crisis. Southern Smoke is a restaurant in my riding. They're fighting hard to keep their hydro costs down. They said that "we did our homework on utility costs, only to have our budget blown out of the water." They've had to reduce staff to keep things running.

Unless hydro bills get under control, life is going to get a lot tougher for small-business owners and their employees. Will this Premier take an important step and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Our Minister of Energy has taken a number of measures to help the very businesses that the leader of the third party is speaking about.

One of the things that the Leader of the Opposition has done is expand our industrial conservation initiative. That's not only going to help thousands of new businesses save on their energy bills, but it will actually provide up to a third of cost savings to those businesses.

In addition, there's a rebate for the provincial portion of the HST that's not only going to every resident homeowner and electricity stakeholder across the province, but it's also going to small businesses, the very small businesses that the leader of the third party is talking about.

So we've taken measures, but our Premier said that there's still more work to do. We're going to continue to work to bring down the costs of our energy for the people of this province and the small businesses of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: After reading about Glow Juicery, a local Hamilton butcher from C.E. Elliott and Sons reached out to the CBC in Hamilton to say this: "We had an almost \$4,000 hydro bill for one month this

season for our small business. It's devastating." Now, that's not a word you just throw around, Speaker.

Will the Premier stop devastating small businesses and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We recognize that small businesses have challenges from time to time, and energy bills are one of those challenges. That's why we've taken the measures that I talked about earlier, that are going to save 8% off energy bills for every small business in this province. That's a substantial savings.

We're going to continue to work to ensure that we do everything we can to lower the cost of power. The Premier is committed to doing this, and to do even more.

Mr. Speaker, I guess what I want to ask the leader of the third party is, did she inform those small businesses of that whole suite of programs that are available to help those small businesses reduce their energy costs? Or does she just want to play politics with this issue and ask questions?

I ask her—come clean—did you inform those businesses of that entire suite of programs, and did you also notify them that as of January 1, they'll be saving 8% off their energy bills?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I can tell the minister that everybody in Ontario knows that the NDP finally got the Liberals to take 8% off the bills. They should never have put the HST on those bills in the first place, and everybody knows it.

Nonetheless, these are stories you hear everywhere you go in Ontario—everywhere you go. Small businesses are doing everything they can to bring down their bills and stay afloat, but they're watching the cost of hydro grow faster and faster and faster. Hydro bills are killing jobs and hurting small businesses across Ontario. That's going to continue unless there's some serious action by this government.

Will this Premier take that kind of action today and commit that no more of Hydro One will be sold off to private interests?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Let's talk about jobs in the province of Ontario. Let's talk about Hamilton: Hamilton is up 5,700 jobs year over year since this month last year.

Let's talk about Windsor: Windsor is up 11,100 jobs, many of them through small businesses that are doing really well. Oshawa: 20,200 jobs year over year from last year. Ontario as a whole, since the global recession, is up 660,000 net new jobs. Our unemployment rate is 6.3%, the lowest level it has been in eight and a half years.

Please, I ask the leader of the third party: Don't talk to us about jobs; that's what we're doing. We're creating jobs across this province. We're building a stronger economy in spite of the negative rhetoric of the party opposite.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Parents of children with

autism cannot trust this government to do the right thing. Take the example of Lisa. Her daughter was cut off from IBI therapy even though the psychologist recommended she continue. The minister's administrator said no to the psychologist's recommendation. Is the minister trying to save money by once again taking away IBI therapy from children who need it?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to first start by saying that I recognize that we have parents here who are advocates for young people with autism in the province of Ontario.

Going across the province and meeting with different parents and people and having conversations, I get the sense that we are heading in the right direction with, first, half a billion new dollars going into autism here in the province of Ontario. That's creating 16,000 new spaces and increasing the amount of spaces for ABA during the transition period.

We want to build a wait time of six months or less and increase access to early diagnosis through the creation of five more regional diagnostic hubs here in the province of Ontario.

I think we're doing the best job when it comes to building an Ontario that works with young people and families with autism here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It sounds like you need to meet Lisa. Lisa's daughter has been removed from the therapy she needs even though a psychologist said she should continue. Parents like Lisa want to be sure that their child gets therapy when they need it, and receive it.

When the government removes children from life-changing IBI therapy, it is clear why there is a trust deficit between parents and this government. Will the minister ensure Lisa's daughter gets the therapy that you promised?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, we're building a new autism program here in the province of Ontario that really aims to build the best program not only here in Canada but right across North America.

Since we announced the changes in June, 1,866 families have signed up for the \$8,000 payment, 369 families have opted for receiving the \$10,000 payment, and, Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on and on. Collectively, that's almost \$20 million invested through the transition.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If she were able to see my eyes, she would know that I'm looking right at her.

Hon. Michael Coteau: We've been working with parents and groups right across the province. In fact, we're working with the Ontario Autism Coalition, and I'd like to thank them for their advocacy. In fact, the president of the coalition said that he was quite pleased with the progress that's being made in autism here in the province of Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. I gave you a chance. The member from Dufferin-Caledon is warned.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Yes I Can nursery in Toronto provides programming for children with autism, but those programs are in jeopardy because the government is cutting their funding. Your government claims that this was one-time funding, but Yes I Can has been receiving this funding for the last nine years. They have built programs with the understanding that they were working towards sustainable funding, but out of the blue, the funding was cut. Will the Premier restore funding to Yes I Can so that no child is left behind?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, I have worked very closely with Yes I Can over the years. There is still \$300,000 that flows through the city of Toronto to Yes I Can nursery. That's ongoing funding to support the excellent program that's available at Yes I Can.

I've also said in this House, and I have said to the owner of Yes I Can, that if she and her team are willing to sit down with the municipality and talk about the business model that they have in place and work towards a sustainable model, we obviously would like to see that happen. That hasn't happened. Even in the face of that, funding continues to flow; the \$300,000 continues to flow to Yes I Can.

1130

There's a great program at Yes I Can, and I hope that the owner of the nursery school would go and have that meeting with the city of Toronto and lay out the business plan so that a sustainable model could be—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Again to the Premier: A single mother of a daughter who is severely autistic lived in Brampton. Her doctor told her that the best thing for her daughter was to attend Yes I Can in Toronto. Wanting the best for her child, the mother moved with her two small children to an apartment in the Premier's own riding of Don Valley West so that her daughter could attend Yes I Can.

The girl is now in specialized communication classes at Yes I Can full time. However, if funding is not restored, those classes could come to an end.

Will the Premier commit to children with autism that she will make children a priority and restore the funding to Yes I Can?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Associate Minister of Education with responsibility for early learning and child care.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this very important question. I want to point out that of course our government understands that Yes I Can nursery provides a valuable service, but I want to start out by pointing out that the party opposite actually voted against investing in child care. I find it very interesting that when it comes to talking about our investments, they are here, wanting to question where we are investing and how we are investing.

Let me explain to you, first of all, how we do invest in child care. When it comes to investing in child care, we do not invest directly. Instead, we flow funding through municipalities. We leave it up to those local service managers to make those—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, the Speaker is standing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I know your voice is a little off. I'm trying to help you out.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's come to order, please.

Finish, please.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I apologize; I am passionate about this.

I do want to point out that we actually fund Yes I Can nursery through the city of Toronto: \$300,000. That's a lot of money. The funding that they got before was one-time transitional, and the executive director knew that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question?

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question today is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Yesterday, all three parties voted unanimously to pass Bill 47, the Protecting Rewards Points Act—

Applause.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you. You're very kind, very kind. Wow. Get the umbrella. Wow.

I really want to thank all members of the House for fast-tracking this bill. It's an important bill for consumers across Ontario. Reward points will no longer be able to expire based on time alone.

Over the past few months, I have heard from many people in my constituency and across the province who were worried, extremely anxious and anguished about their expiring reward points. They were angry about the lack of fairness, about having something that they've earned taken away from them.

I'd like to ask the minister: Will she inform the House about this particular piece of legislation?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for his question, and for his strong advocacy on this issue and on consumer protection as a whole. Congratulations.

Simply put, the people of Ontario are fully behind Bill 47. It makes Ontario a worldwide leader in rewards points protection. Everyone on this side of the House believes in a safe and fair marketplace, and this is why we're standing up for consumers.

It's unfortunate that we had to drag the PC Party to begrudgingly vote for this bill. It reminds me of the banning of expiry dates on gift cards in November 2006, when the official opposition voted against the legislation that this consumer protection initiative was an important part of.

Our government is committed to strong consumer protection and a fair marketplace. Ontarians can count on the members of this side of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I stand, you sit. That's the rule.

Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to thank the minister for that great explanation and the fantastic work that she is doing to protect consumers in the province of Ontario.

On this side of the House, we have been standing up for consumers. During the holiday season, when you purchase a gift card and you earn your reward points, you will be protected. These protections ensure that consumers have confidence in the value and the benefits that are advertised as part of a loyalty program.

I've heard from so many people who characterized this as an early holiday or Christmas present. Speaker, can the minister inform the House about how this bill will provide a gift to consumers for the holiday season?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you to the member from Beaches–East York for his festive supplementary. Mr. Speaker, I want all Ontarians to know that they don't need to worry if they have points that are about to expire, as Bill 47 is retroactive to October 1 of this year. This means that you can continue saving all of those points for a trip or that next big gift.

With the holiday shopping season upon us, I know that Ontarians will be happy that they can be at ease with rewards points. We are committed to continuing to work with rewards points companies to ensure that consumers are protected and have confidence in every purchase they make and every point they earn. Loyalty points are a promise, and now it is a promise that has to be kept. Mr. Speaker, this is all part of our government's plan to put consumers first.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. This morning it was revealed that all appeals in the Windstream NAFTA case are now over. The case has been won by Windstream, with taxpayers being on the hook for at least \$28 million.

In response to my question on October 17 about this issue, the Minister of Energy said Ontario is "carefully reviewing" the case "in order to determine next steps." Well, I say to the Premier that the next step is going to be to cut a cheque. The federal government will have to pay up front; we realize that. But we all know that this mistake is the Premier's, and Ontarians will ultimately pay.

Is the Premier prepared to apologize for this energy fiasco and be honest with ratepayers about the true cost of her latest mistake?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's important to remember that at the early stage in development, the tribunal said that the decision was "driven by a genuine policy concern

that there was not sufficient scientific support for establishing an appropriate ... offshore wind" project. That is very important. The Leader of the Opposition was talking earlier about the need for evidence-based decisions, and this is very much an example of it. The Ministry of the Environment has been working very hard to review that. The consultant's work is coming in and should be released.

I would certainly hope that the member opposite would want to see this worked through and see an evidence-based decision made within the accordance of the law and the tribunal ruling.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Decisions have been made, Speaker. This government made the wrong decision to build turbines in the Great Lakes. Then they signed contracts to have them built. And then, for political reasons, to save Liberal seats, they cancelled the contracts. Now they've got to pay.

And this is not only the \$28 million for the court case. The federal government had 10 lawyers on the case at a cost of \$8 million. The Wynne government had 20 lawyers on the case and refuses to reveal the cost of that legal team.

Speaker, will the Premier today reveal the absolute total cost of the legal team so that the people of Ontario know just how much this latest Wynne mistake is going to cost them?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to be very clear, and I think folks should take a deep breath. When these turbines were proposed, there were, in the world, no offshore wind turbines in fresh bodies of water. No freshwater lakes had wind turbines.

A decision was made by the Ministry of the Environment that work was needed to be done to do that. As you would know, Lake Ontario and Lake Erie are the two most stressed lakes in Ontario and likely in Canada, with highly fragile ecosystems, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection.

1140

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned. I'm not going to stop trying to make sure things are even here.

Minister?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: So I would hope the members opposite would see, since they argue for evidence-based decisions, that the kind of research that has been done over the last two years is absolutely critical to making this decision to proceed. The alternative is not to—

Mr. Todd Smith: Why did you sign the deal?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

New question.

BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SALES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. This morning, in their haste to ram through omnibus Bill 70, Liberal members of the finance committee voted down amendments that would save Ontario's craft distillers. Instead, Bill 70 will devastate Ontario's craft distilling industry.

Distillers have been working with Mr. Clark's advisory council for over two years. They want the same treatment as craft brewers: a graduated tax to give small producers a fighting chance. And they deserve a fighting chance. It's a matter of fairness. Ontario's 16 craft distilleries are small, local businesses trying to become pillars of their local communities.

Can the Premier explain to Ontario's craft distillers and their customers why she is opposed to fairness?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Nothing could be further from the truth. Our finance minister has been working very closely with our distillery industry. It's an industry that's growing in this province. Actually, it's growing by leaps and bounds. What he has put in place is something they have asked for, which is going to provide them with some breaks in terms of the amount of dollars in rebates they get back from the LCBO. They'll be getting more dollars to their bottom line, not less.

So the member is grossly misinformed on this particular matter. She really ought to check with the Ministry of Finance to update her information, because the measures that the Minister of Finance is moving forward with, if passed, will benefit our distilleries, small, medium and large.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to tell the minister that the distillers opened their books, and I believe them over your government any day.

Ed Clark and his advisory council forced Ontario's craft distillers to sign non-disclosure agreements. This Premier allowed her hand-picked banker to tell small-business owners that they weren't allowed to speak to their own MPPs about issues they were facing. This is Kathleen Wynne's Ontario.

I remember that this Premier used to talk about openness and transparency. Ontario's craft distillers were blindsided by Bill 70. It will force many of them to sell their products abroad instead of in Ontario, change their business models entirely, or simply just shut down.

Speaker, will this Premier change her mind, make a commitment to fairness, and allow a graduated rate of tax for craft distillers in the province Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Let's be very clear about this. Let's break it down to a bottle of spirits. For a bottle that costs \$40, a distiller's current share of revenue is about 39%. Changes that the finance minister is proposing would increase their share of revenue to about 45%. No matter how you cut it, no matter how you spin it, more money will go into the pockets of our small, medium and large distillers.

So you're dead wrong, and you'd better do your math, because more money will go to the small, medium and large distillers, no matter how you cut it.

BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SALES

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is also to the Minister of Economic Development and Growth, and I'm going to persist on him to explain what I'm going to ask, Speaker.

I know our government is doing much to support new manufacturers and support growing sectors of our economy, including the province's craft distillers. I understand that the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets and the Ministry of Finance have been consulting with small distillers on how best to support them to grow their business and scale up.

There are a number of proposed changes in Bill 70 that will impact how Ontario craft distillers operate. There seems to be some confusion as to whether the proposed changes will benefit Ontario's craft distillers. Can you provide some clarity as to how these changes will help craft distillers?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I agree, Mr. Speaker: The opposition is very confused on this particular issue.

Let me say that our government is committed to fostering a more innovative and dynamic business environment in Ontario, including for the rapidly growing craft distillery sector—a very exciting sector in this province. That's why our Minister of Finance listened closely to Ontario distillers and introduced legislation that, if passed, would remove the LCBO markup and commission structure at on-site distillery retail stores and replace with it a new tax structure. The result will be improved sales margins for distillers at their on-site retail locations. For example, as I said earlier, a \$40 bottle would see their revenues go from 39% to 45%, a substantial increase to their bottom line. Good news for the distillery industry in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Back to the Minister of Economic Development and Growth: On-site retail is crucial to small producers' success, and we value the contribution that distillers make to our local communities. In less than five years, the number of distillers in our community has grown. That is evidence that there is a bright and promising future for craft spirits here in Ontario.

I'm aware that there are additional supports available from our government to distillers through various economic development funds. Distillers are already benefiting from opportunities through the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and the Ontario Centre of Excellence Fund. Can you tell us in what other ways we are supporting this rapidly growing sector?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we know that attracting new customers is important to distillers, and we want to provide them with more support. That's why we've proposed, in Bill 70, a tax exemption on up to 1,250 litres of spirits for promotional use.

We're also working to ensure that distillers will be able to sell their products directly to bars and restaurants. These changes are designed to improve their bottom line and help them invest higher and grow so that their businesses can continue to create jobs in this province. This is a sector that I believe has grown about tenfold, Mr. Speaker, something we're excited about. I'm pleased that the Minister of Finance is listening closely to this sector and is taking measures to help them grow even more.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Michael Harris: To the Minister of Health: Minister, in the year since my motion to treat rare disease, sufferers have welcomed the news of a working group in steps towards actual treatment here in Ontario. Even as we welcome that action, many are concerned that recent, shocking murder charges against an Ontario neurosurgeon in the death of his wife may set them back further.

As our hearts and prayers go to the victim's family in dealing with this unspeakable tragedy, we are also mindful of the impacts extending into the rare-disease community. Speaker, Erika Crawford is a brave 21-year-old. After years of living with the draining effects of EDS, she finally had hope of surgery by the only doctor in Ontario selected to do it, a doctor now facing charges. Rare disease and EDS patients have waited far too long. Erika Crawford has waited too long. Will the minister commit to ensuring these families don't fall through the cracks again?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to thank the member from Kitchener-Conestoga and commend him on his substantial and ongoing advocacy on behalf of individuals with rare diseases. Also, Mr. Speaker, allow me to express my sincere and deepest condolences to the family, to the friends and to the colleagues of Dr. Elana Fric-Shamji, whose life was tragically and brutally cut short. It has absolutely devastated anyone who knew her. It has devastated the medical community across this province. She was a much-loved, highly respected family doctor and physician leader practising at Scarborough General Hospital.

I will address the critical aspect of ensuring that the patients of the neurosurgeon who is alleged to be behind her murder—I will address that issue in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Erika was scheduled for surgery yesterday, but she is not the only one. There are 31-year-old Lindsay Wilson and many more EDS patients desperately awaiting surgery. This was the only doctor selected to perform that surgery in Ontario, after working alongside EDS expert Dr. Fraser Henderson in Maryland. Until now, the Crawfords had to go to the US and spend \$200,000 on care with Dr. Henderson and were hopeful for the promise of OHIP-covered surgery here in Ontario by an Ontario doctor, only to have that hope dashed.

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Speaker, Erika's father, Darren, tells us that Dr. Henderson is more than willing and able to come to Ontario to perform that surgery himself. Will the minister explain what he'll do to allow EDS patients the surgery they've been waiting for here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I remain just as committed to patients across this province with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, or EDS. We have invested upwards of a million dollars specifically for a unique clinic at Toronto Western Hospital through University Health Network to provide support for individuals with EDS, to guide them through the treatment pathway, to refer them to the specialists that they require and the surgeons that they require, if necessary.

With regard to the care that would have been provided by the neurosurgeon who was involved in the program, my ministry has been working closely—in fact, they were working over the weekend and are working this week—with University Health Network and Toronto Western to ensure that those patients who have been negatively impacted by this horrible tragedy—that that commitment remains and they will get the specialized service that they deserve. That's my commitment to them. It hasn't changed.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Today, as we remember the 14 women who died at École Polytechnique, we also recognize the many women in Ontario who struggle to flee from violence and abuse.

One of the essential programs that helps vulnerable women stop the cycle of violence is the Family Court Support Worker Program, which provides specialized services such as safety planning, preparing for court and assisting women to file restraining orders. Through an FOI I've learned that the Premier and her government reduced funding for this already underfunded but highly effective program.

Why did the government cut funding to a program designed to support women who experience violence?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the minister is going to want to comment in the supplementary, but let me first just say I appreciate the member acknowledging that today is a day when we remember a horrible tragedy. But in addition to that, we recognize that those incidents of sexual assault and violence, gendered violence and misogyny continue, and so it behooves every single one of us to speak out against that violence.

Our government has made increased investment in the services to support women and anyone who is escaping violence. We will continue to do so. We will continue to raise this issue and continue to raise awareness as well as make those investments, as well as working to put legislative changes in place that protect victims and prevent these incidents from happening in the first place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: There has been no increased investment in the Family Court Support Worker Program and, in fact, women and community advocates have told me repeatedly about how effective the program is in helping women leave abusive relationships, which is why demand for the program has been increasing. The government's own briefing notes speak to the success of the program. Cutting funding just doesn't make sense, especially when it's vulnerable women who are paying the price.

Given that today is the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, will the Premier take action and commit to properly funding the Family Court Support Worker Program?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm more than happy to answer this question, and of course start by first of all recognizing that today of course marks a very special day in terms of all of us collectively standing and saying no to violence against women—but just not today; we have to do that every single day and we all have to work collectively.

That is why our government and our Premier have spent so much focus and emphasis on ensuring that we stand against both violence against women and any sexual violence and harassment that may exist. And collectively—not just the Ministry of the Attorney General, but a variety of ministries—we are working together through our violence against women roundtable to ensure that we've got effective programming in place. That is why we have programs like the Partner Assault Response Program and other programs like that as well, and we increased our funding.

Speaker, I, as the Attorney General, am very much committed to ensuring that these programs are strengthened.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Land use planning is vital to the growth and development of all Ontario communities, but it's not always a smooth or easy process. My riding of Trinity-Spadina has seen unprecedented redevelopment in recent years. The growth has brought positive economic impacts to my community; however, the plans proposed by developers sometimes conflict with the wishes of the communities. Some of my constituents and my local city councillor have expressed concern that not enough weight is given to the local decision-makers when decisions go to the Ontario Municipal Board.

Would the minister please explain how his ministry is working to help municipalities have a greater say in local planning decisions and ensure the OMB supports the well-planned neighbourhoods in Ontario?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for his question and his advocacy on this issue. I would mention that other members of our caucus as well—the members from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Peter

Milczyn, and Scarborough—Agincourt, Soo Wong—have taken a strong advocacy role on this particular file and held their own public consultations on OMB reform. I want to thank them for their work.

But where I'd like to start is by letting people know that I think it's important that the work we're doing today through this consultation is not the starting point of reform that we have brought to the OMB. As far as back as 2007, we enabled all municipalities across the province of Ontario to create their own local appeal bodies.

To this date, unfortunately, none have undertaken that authority. It's good to see that the city of Toronto, through a resolution back in March, has started the process of moving forward. Had that been in place, fully two thirds of all Toronto cases before the OMB that had gone there in 2015 and 2016 could have been dealt with at the local level.

This will build on that work. It's not the starting point—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Thank you very much, and I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for his answer. I'm pleased to learn our government is taking action to put more decision-making power in the hands of local residents, because that is fair and it ensures sustainable growth.

I recently attended one of the public consultations on the government's OMB review in my riding at the convention centre. I want to take this opportunity to thank all staff who have worked hard to facilitate the province-wide consultation.

I myself and the member from Davenport will be hosting our own consultation with our residents soon. We look forward to submitting our findings to the ministry, and I encourage all members of this House to host their own consultations and pass on their constituents' views on the OMB to the minister by December 19.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he tell us more about the OMB review process and how Ontarians across the province can participate?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I thank the member for his question. I want to acknowledge that this is a two-pronged approach. Our ministry is dealing with half of it. I also want to thank the Minister of the Attorney General for his work on this particular file.

At the end of day, the goal for us, in our ministry, through what we call a scoping exercise, is to have more deference to what we would say is local decision-making authority.

I do want to say that we do believe it is important that there be some form of appeal mechanism in place for people who have a strong interest when it comes to local land use planning decisions.

It's important to note that all jurisdictions in Canada, all provincial jurisdictions, have some form of an appeal mechanism. In fact, if they did not, the only method of

appeal that people who have an interest in this file or issues related to this file would have would be through the courts. We think that that would be unattainable for some people; they wouldn't be able to afford it. The timelines associated with that would not be good.

So we're moving forward. We're pleased with all who have been engaged with us so far and we look forward to bringing recommendations in the near future.

MINISTRY GRANTS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question today is to the Premier. In December 2015, Ontario's Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk, reported that this government had handed out hundreds of corporate grants totalling \$1.87 billion. Many of these were handed out by invitation only, as we all know, with most going to the largest and wealthiest companies.

I have asked for this list to be made public so that all taxpayers can see how their money has been spent, what companies received the money and how many jobs, if any, were created.

My question this morning is very simple: Why won't this Liberal government make the list of corporate grant recipients public for everybody in the province of Ontario to see?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Well, Mr. Speaker, let me answer that question quite simply: We are, and we will. We have put forward on a website all of the investments that we've made—because we're very proud of them—from, I think, 2013 forward, something like that. For the investments prior to that, we're in the process of putting them online as well. We're very proud of those investments.

But we do have an obligation to go back to the businesses to let them know what's being made public so we protect their—what do they call it?

Interjections.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Commercial integrity.

But we are very, very proud of the investments we have made. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we're now up to \$3.1 billion of investments that we've made. That has leveraged \$31 billion of private sector investment and 175,000 jobs. We want every one of those jobs to be put on the website so Ontarians know that we support those jobs. The member opposite—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: I first started asking for this government to release a list of all corporate grant handouts 326 days ago, and so far, just like the Auditor General and all MPPs, I've been stonewalled. It makes me wonder what the reason is for the Liberals to keep a list of nearly \$2 billion that was handed out to private corporations secret. Is it because most of the money went to Liberal-held ridings, or is it because they got caught in a cash-for-access scheme

where Liberal friends secured contracts, like the wind energy companies?

Mr. Speaker, taxpayers deserve to know: Will the government release the full list today of the 374 companies that received billions of dollars from Ontario's taxpayers? If not, why not?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Never too late to get a warning.

Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: As I said, we're proud to put that information out. We want every Ontarian to know that we've invested \$3.1 billion in our business support programs. That has leveraged \$31 billion of private sector investment and 175,000 jobs. To be sure, a good majority of those, or many of them—most of it has gone into Conservative ridings more than Liberal ridings. Liberal ridings since 2013: \$72.89 million from the Jobs and Prosperity Fund; Conservative ridings, \$85.74 million. Regional economic development funds: Liberal ridings, \$13.95 million since 2013; Conservative ridings, \$18.86 million.

Mr. Speaker, he's got his numbers reversed. We're creating jobs in every riding across this province, including that of the member opposite, who I think received about \$2 million worth of business support programs and tens of thousands of jobs. We're proud—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

L'UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de l'éducation avancée et du développement des habiletés.

La semaine dernière, la ministre a annoncé les six personnes au conseil de planification, présidé par M^{me} Dyane Adam. Malheureusement, l'annonce exclut les jeunes personnes, ceux et celles qui se sont le plus investis dans la création d'une université franco. L'annonce a été non seulement blessante, mais elle a été méprisante, selon la FESFO et le RÉFO, et je suis bien d'accord avec eux.

Le mandat du comité est d'améliorer l'accès à l'éducation postsecondaire en français dans le centre et le sud-ouest. Il n'y a rien de mal avec ça, monsieur le Président, mais ce que les gens veulent vraiment savoir, c'est quand est-ce que le gouvernement va faire le premier pas envers l'université provinciale, gérée pour et par les Franco-Ontariens?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Je remercie la députée de Nickel Belt pour sa question. Je veux vraiment réaffirmer fermement que les choses avancent. Le travail du conseil de planification est une étape cruciale pour la mise en place de l'université franco-ontarienne dans le centre-sud-ouest et constitue la

réponse appropriée aux demandes de la communauté pour élargir l'espace postsecondaire en français dans la région.

Nous avons, tel que mentionné, annoncé cet automne la nomination de la D^{re} Dyane Adam à la présidence du conseil. Les gens de la communauté ont applaudi cette nomination, car la D^{re} Adam est l'experte la mieux placée pour établir un plan solide pour cette institution.

Soyons clairs, monsieur le Président, je veux—et nous, du côté du gouvernement, voulons—que cette institution postsecondaire fonctionne, qu'elle soit durable et que les francophones bilingues et les étudiants en immersion choisissent de poursuivre leurs études postsecondaires en français. Pour cela, nous devons—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci.

The time for question period is over.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 6, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1205 to 1210.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 5, 2016, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 6. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Matthews, Deborah	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Sattler, Peggy
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet

Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia

Smith, Todd
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 52; the nays are 39.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic, Development and Growth on a point of order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I just want to correct my record. In a little bit of lingering jet lag, I think I referred to the Leader of the Opposition when I meant to refer to the Minister of Energy in one of my answers. I thank the Deputy Premier for bringing that to my attention, because I had no idea.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1214 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm very pleased to welcome some people from Hamilton who want to see their petition read in this afternoon: Julie Michael, community member, GALA—she spearheaded the project for the petition; Shahad Al-Saqqar, Neighbourhood Leadership Institute; Judy Kloosterman, the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton; Patti Encinas, a Sherman community member who also was part of the petition signing; Alain Bureau, a Sherman community member as well; and Christian Ly, a community member from Toronto, as well as Heather Clarke, from the Sherman community in my riding. Welcome to Queen's Park, everyone. It's great to see you here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, I was born in West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby, as were many of the residents of Niagara West—Glanbrook. The care provided by the physicians and health care professionals at that hospital is second to none in Ontario. They deserve support and honest, genuine consideration.

Throughout the campaign, and since I was elected a couple of weeks ago, I have heard grave concerns raised by physicians in my riding, and from health care

providers across the province, about Bill 41, the so-called Putting Patients First Act. Could there possibly be more of a misnomer?

Bill 41 threatens the quality of health care provided to my constituents and puts patients last. To borrow a military analogy, our health care system needs more teeth and less tail. But Bill 41 is going in the opposite direction: hurting patients, hampering doctors and harming our health care system.

Our government has a duty toward its doctors: a responsibility to hold open, honest and genuine consultations. With Bill 41, we see once again the symptoms of a failing government, a government playing politics with people's health.

Ontario's patients and my neighbours in Niagara West—Glanbrook deserve better.

RON DUNN

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise today on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West.

The Downtown Mission in Windsor is critical to the health and credibility of our community. It provides safe accommodation, meals, clothing and training to individuals struggling with poverty and homelessness. The programs and services provided by the mission make Windsor a safer, healthier and more inclusive place, but it's the people working and volunteering at the mission that make this all possible. I would like to thank all of those working and volunteering at the mission for their hard work and dedication.

In particular, I want to highlight the commitment of Ronald Dunn. Ron is a strong leader and mentor and is able to effect change in the greater community. He is a collaborator and always willing to speak up on behalf of the disenfranchised and those living in poverty.

When Ron noted an increase in demand for services at the mission because of the high cost of hydro, he did not hesitate to speak out. He is a true champion for those living in poverty.

Ron doesn't do his job for monetary gain, awards or accolades. Rather, this is something he thinks of as his duty and his calling, each and every day.

The person who is always there for people through their most difficult times is himself going through a difficult period. Ron lost his mother this week, and his father is in the ICU, recovering from a serious illness.

I think I speak on behalf of all those in Windsor when I say: We are here for you, Ron, and thank you for all that you do.

ERINOAKKIDS CENTRE FOR TREATMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: It is with great pleasure that I address the Ontario Legislature today. My riding of Mississauga—Erindale is eagerly awaiting the completion of a vital resource centre for our community. Children

suffering with learning disabilities, autism and a host of other challenges will be able to attend the new state-of-the-art Erinoak facility after it opens early in the new year.

Children and families in need who live in Peel region will now have Ontario's largest treatment centre available to them within their own community. The challenges that these families face cannot be overstated, and it is places like ErinoakKids that help alleviate some of this stress.

Mr. Speaker, I have toured the construction of the centre and spoken with the wonderful staff that are making this facility a soon-to-be reality. This is a practical, comprehensive and, most importantly, compassionate project that is directed specifically to children and families who otherwise may not have this support. ErinoakKids anticipates serving approximately 5,000 children and their families each from this site, which will be about 20% of their caseload.

All Peel-area MPPs worked hard to keep this project on top of the capital projects list. I salute their efforts in helping to make a positive difference in both the community as well as for countless youth and families that ErinoakKids will positively affect. I also want to thank our government for having the foresight to make this project a reality.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Jim McDonell: Over the next few months, the Upper Canada District School Board and other school boards across Ontario could come to the ill-advised and harmful decisions to close rural schools in many communities, including my own. Closing rural schools and busing students long distances to overcrowded schools is not the answer. Local schools allow our children to grow and thrive while providing them with community spirit, pride and a sense of belonging. Good local schools provide fantastic education opportunities and give students a chance to participate in activities close to home. Laggan Public School, serving children in Glengarry county, is ranked the number one school in Ontario by the Fraser Institute.

Parents, students and municipal councils from across the province demand a moratorium on the current, flawed accommodation reviews. The minister must show leadership and work with all stakeholders to implement a sustainable funding formula for rural schools. It's not too late for the Minister of Education to act and do what's right.

Speaker, I'm really proud of the communities that have come together right across SD&G to show the leadership to keep our schools open and working within our communities. They are really working as a team. We look forward to January. We hope that the government acknowledges the importance of these rural schools and how well they are doing. As I mentioned, Laggan, Williamstown—these schools are ranking as some of the top in the country and in the province, and it's not

something that we need to close because we need better service.

DIANNE COLANTONIO

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise to pay tribute to a long-time friend of our family and a long-time activist in the community of Essex—her name was Dianne Colantonio, a constituent of mine and a long-time social activist in our community—who passed away peacefully on November 18. Dianne was a teacher in special education within the city of Windsor. Her love of teaching continued as she became involved in the children's program at the Maidstone Bicentennial Museum and in volunteering with the 4-H club for over 30 years. She worked in various county fairs across the county of Essex. She worked for Elections Canada as a poll clerk and as a volunteer for Statistics Canada.

She was inducted into the Essex County Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2006, recognizing Dianne's contributions as a third-generation farmer. She was a past president of her local Women's Institute and a past president of the Essex county 4-H Leaders' Association. Dianne had been a 4-H leader with membership for over 30 years. Dianne was also a member of the farm safety association and an integral part of the Pizza Project, which promoted market-to-market programs.

Dianne's family and friends, of course, will miss her dearly. My sincere condolences go out to her family: Nunzio (Butch), her husband of 48 years; her children Kris, Marc and Nancy; and grandchildren Marc Jr. and Alexandra. Dianne was an integral component of our community. She made our community a better place, and we certainly will miss her.

AUTOMATED VEHICLES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: If you visit my riding, you may see on the streets of Waterloo region a very unusual sight. It's a black Lincoln MKZ car that drives itself. This autonomous vehicle, the first to be legally allowed on Ontario roads and in all of Canada, for that matter, has been affectionately named the Autonomoose by the University of Waterloo engineering students who are driving this pilot program.

A few weeks ago, I was joined by our Minister of Transportation at a test track with the students, administrators, local elected representatives and a large gathering of media as the Autonomoose drove us hands-free. This 10-year pilot program is being made possible by BlackBerry QNX software, Kitchener-based Erwin Hymer Group and the province of Ontario.

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This cutting-edge car is equipped with a laser scanner on the top that spins around with information being fed to a computer in the trunk, which helps to navigate the car. We know that automated vehicles hold out promise for safer roads, less traffic, less pollution and expanded research and development. Because of this government's

support and insight, we are leading the way in all of Canada in this area.

I will say, Speaker, that it was a bit disconcerting to be riding in this vehicle, and the student in the driver's seat did not have his hands on the wheel. But disruptive technology will do that; it'll make us feel a little bit uncomfortable. However, I say that anything that frees me from having to parallel-park is a good thing.

An automated vehicle supply chain is coming. We want to have those jobs here in the province of Ontario.

STEVE SANDERSON

Mr. Michael Harris: I stand to recognize Kitchener resident Steve Sanderson for his efforts to open up hockey opportunities to children who cannot otherwise afford it, efforts that saw him earn the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship this weekend.

While congratulations go out to every one of this weekend's 19 recipients, I'll take a few moments to express the thanks in our community to Steve for the Panther Hockey program he launched back in 2002.

It was 14 years ago that Steve Sanderson, the head custodian at Pioneer Park Public School in Doon, began wondering what he could do to help students unable to afford enrolling in hockey. Those thoughts sparked the idea for the Panther Hockey program, a school-based hockey initiative that provides all the equipment and ice time free of charge to interested students between grades 1 and 6.

The program started out with donations from family, friends and the school community, but it wasn't enough, so Steve purchased the extra.

I'm happy to say that the program has grown to the point where there are now 145 participants. In the past year, Panther Hockey received 20 full sets of equipment from the NHLPA, along with a practice assisted by former NHL player and Guelph Storm hockey club head coach Scott Walker.

Steve plans to keep building the Panther program and is always seeking keen volunteers to keep the skates moving and, of course, the sticks on the ice.

Speaker, I would like to, on behalf of all of us here and those in the extended Panther family, give a big thank you to Steve Sanderson, a custodian, a Panther and a good citizen of Ontario. Thanks, Steve.

FEIHE INTERNATIONAL INC.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I am delighted to share the announcement that Feihe International from China has recently selected Kingston and the Islands as their new home. This spring they will be building a brand new, 40-acre, \$250-million infant-formula-manufacturing facility in my community.

Feihe's innovative goat-milk-based formula has an outstanding reputation and is admired in China and other markets for its hypoallergenic properties.

At a reception last week, I welcomed Vice-Chairman Roger Liu and Vice-President Judy Tu and their team from China. Vice-Chairman Liu expressed his appreciation for all stakeholders, levels of government and partners involved in bringing this historic announcement and investment to Kingston. In fact, the reception, welcome and multi-level governmental co-operation that Feihe received from our community was one of the very reasons they chose Kingston and the Islands from among many other cities in North America.

I'm grateful to Minister Leal and to our Premier for their warm welcome and discussions, which took place in meetings here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, this is the building of a stronger, better Ontario in action, and this historic investment will see 200 full-time positions created.

It is my honour to welcome Feihe to Kingston and to thank them for their confidence in their new city. We look forward to this monumental announcement turning into legendary success.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: I rise today on behalf of my constituents in Kawartha Lakes to express their profound frustration with the Wynne government's failure to follow their own processes when it comes to their pet wind turbine projects. The Settlers Landing and Sumac Ridge projects in my riding were forced on unwilling communities and are only serving to drive up electricity prices and degrade the local environment.

The Minister of Energy recently admitted that signing 20-year contracts for renewable energy projects that specified a technology was "arbitrary, and led to sub-optimal siting, uncompetitive prices and heightened community concern." Yet the government still approved wind turbine construction this past summer at the Sumac Ridge project. They did this after the required date of completion of the project had passed, and without the Minister of the Environment having fulfilled his statutory requirement of responding to a direct appeal from local residents. That appeal has been outstanding for over 18 months.

In the meantime, the government has spent taxpayers' money fighting ERT appeals made by citizens; steam-rolled over municipalities by taking planning authority away from them; and industrialized the Oak Ridges moraine instead of protecting it.

The Minister of Energy put a stop to the LRP II projects due to the power not being needed in the province, and my constituents are wondering why the Settlers Landing and Sumac Ridge wind projects are still going forward.

The minister should reply to local residents' appeals under the Environmental Protection Act to stop these harmful and precedent-setting projects from proceeding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a special report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated December 6, 2016, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 7, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts with respect to housing and planning / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 24, 2016, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 45, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to provincial elections / Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à modifier certaines lois en ce qui concerne les élections provinciales.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted. Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 24, 2016, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO SERVICE DOGS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LES CHIENS
D'ASSISTANCE EN ONTARIO

Mr. Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act respecting the rights of persons with disabilities who use service dogs / Projet de loi 80, Loi concernant les droits des personnes handicapées qui ont recours à des chiens d'assistance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Michael Harris: Today I introduce the Ontario Service Dogs Act to prohibit the denial of accommodation, services or facilities to an individual or discriminating against an individual with respect to accommodations, services, or facilities because the individual is a person with a disability who is accompanied by a service dog; or who requires the accompaniment of a support person or the use of an assistive device to assist them with their service dog. The bill further directs that a person who contravenes the prohibition is liable to a fine of up to \$5,000.

LONG-TERM CARE HOMES
AMENDMENT ACT (PREFERENCE
FOR VETERANS), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES
FOYERS DE SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE
(PRÉFÉRENCE ACCORDÉE
AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS)

Ms. Forster moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to give preference to veterans for access to beds / Projet de loi 81, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée pour accorder la préférence aux anciens combattants qui veulent avoir accès à des lits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

1520

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cindy Forster: The bill amends the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, to require the minister to ensure that preference in admission to long-term-care homes is

given to veterans. The bill also amends the act by enacting a definition of “veteran” that includes former officers and former non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces.

LAWREN HARRIS DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR

DE LAWREN HARRIS

Mr. Dong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to proclaim Lawren Harris Day /
Projet de loi 82, Loi proclamant le Jour de Lawren Harris.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Han Dong: The bill proclaims October 23 in each year as Lawren Harris Day.

FAIRNESS IN LABOUR RELATIONS ACT (BARGAINING UNITS AND CERTIFICATION OF TRADE UNIONS), 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ DANS LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL (UNITÉS DE NÉGOCIATION ET ACCRÉDITATION DES SYNDICATS)

Mr. McDonell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to the determination of bargaining units and the certification of trade unions /
Projet de loi 83, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui concerne la détermination des unités de négociation et l'accréditation des syndicats.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Fairness in Labour Relations Act (Bargaining Units and Certification of Trade Unions), 2016:

The bill amends the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

A trade union is no longer required to include a written description of the proposed bargaining unit in an application for certification. If it does not include one, the bargaining unit for the purposes of the application consists of all employees of the employer at the time, with the application, subject to the regulations under the act.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board is required to hold a hearing when determining whether to direct a representation vote under section 8 of the act. The board is required to base the voting constituency for the vote on the determination of the bargaining unit that it makes

under section 9 of the act. The bill adds another circumstance in which the board is required to order a representation vote, specifically if the board determines that the employer or person acting on behalf of the employer has interfered improperly with the activities of the trade union to achieve the threshold of 40% membership among individuals in the bargaining unit which triggers a representation vote. The bill extends the time limit for an order for the holding of a representation vote from five to 10 days after the day on which the application for certification is filed with the board.

The board is prohibited from certifying a trade union as the bargaining agent of the employees in a bargaining unit unless a representation vote is held among the employees.

At present, employees in the construction industry are exempt from certain restrictions in section 79 of the act against striking. The bill removes that exemption.

At present, if a complaint alleges that an employer or employers' organization has contravened the act with respect to employment practices, the burden of proof in an inquiry by the board into the complaint lies with the employer or employers' organization. The bill transfers the burden of proof to the complainant.

At present, a party affected by a decision of the board has no right of appeal. The bill provides a right of appeal to the Divisional Court in accordance with the rules of the court.

In determining the unit of employees in the construction industry that is appropriate for collective bargaining, the board is no longer permitted to refer to a geographic area and is not permitted to confine the unit to a particular work site or shift.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): By way of explanation, it looked like the member was reading from the explanatory notes. That is what I've always asked for, and it's very appropriate. However, I remind all members that you can shorten the explanatory notes to make it a brief statement. I'll just leave it at that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But I notice the Tories are tacking to the right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to entertain any heckling during introduction of bills.

I would like to ask if there are any other introductions of bills.

The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

LEGISLATIVE SECURITY SERVICE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No, I have a point of order, with your indulgence, sir.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I've just noticed that the new recruits in the legislative police service are up here, the security service. I would like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

MOTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 16

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Hazel McCallion Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you want it back, I'll give it back to you.

The minister is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 16. Do we agree? Agreed.

Just deliver it back. Thank you.

I did an extra move I didn't need to do, so carry on, Minister.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that Mr. Hatfield and Ms. Jones be added as co-sponsors to Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Hazel McCallion Day, currently standing in the name of Mrs. Mangat.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister moves that Mr. Hatfield and Ms. Jones be added as co-sponsors to Bill 16, An Act to proclaim Hazel McCallion Day, currently standing in the name of Mrs. Mangat. Do we agree? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSESDAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION
ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
JOURNÉE DE COMMÉMORATION
ET D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE
FAITE AUX FEMMES

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Good afternoon. I stand today to observe December 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. Each year on this day, we mark the anniversary of one of the most tragic days of our history. It's a sad day for me, for women and for people across Ontario and Canada. It was on this day in 1989 that 14 women were murdered at École Polytechnique de Montréal.

C'étaient des femmes jeunes, principalement des étudiantes d'une vingtaine d'années. La plupart faisaient des études en génie. Si elles étaient vivantes aujourd'hui, elles seraient à l'apogée de leur carrière.

Leur avenir a été brisé par un acte de violence misogynne. Les femmes ont été la cible d'un homme armé qui a déclaré haïr les féministes, qui a séparé les femmes et les hommes, et qui avait sur lui une liste de noms intitulée « Féministes à abattre ».

Ce qui s'est passé ce jour-là était un acte brutal et insensé fondé sur le sexe.

These were young women, mainly students in their early twenties. Most were studying engineering. If they were alive today, they would be in the prime of their careers.

All of their futures were cut short by an act of violent misogyny. The women were targeted by a gunman who said he hated feminists, who separated the women from the men, and who carried a list of names under the heading "Feminists to slaughter."

What happened that day was a brutal and senseless act of gender-based violence.

Twenty-seven years have passed, but the tragedy is still fresh in our minds. We must never forget what happened. The best way to do that, of course, is to remember by name those who were lost: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

1530

Today we remember them, but we do more than that. We speak out loudly to address the unacceptable reality that violence against women and girls persists today. It's violence that is rooted in misogyny and crosses every social boundary. It can and it does happen in every segment of society. We remember all who have been lost to gender-based violence, and we restate our commitment to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

Two years ago, our government committed to ending sexual violence and harassment through our action plan It's Never Okay. Through this plan, we've raised awareness about sexual violence and harassment through the public education campaigns It's Never Okay and Who Will You Help? These campaigns sent a clear message about what sexual violence and harassment look like, and what you can do—what anyone can do—to stop it.

Since we launched these campaigns, research shows that the number of Ontarians who feel obligated to intervene if they witness sexual violence has gone up. It's a positive sign that attitudes are changing for the better.

Through our action plan, we have also provided training and resources for front-line workers in the hospitality, health, education and community service sectors so that they can better help survivors and those at risk of sexual violence. We're also increasing supports in developing an enhanced prosecution model so that survivors have more information and supports as they navigate the criminal justice system. And we're inspiring generational change. We're helping students gain a deeper understanding of the root causes of gender inequality, and issues of healthy relationships and consent.

As we mourn the loss of 14 women today, we are also reminded of all the women and girls who have experienced violence and the threat of violence every day. This fall, I was honoured to attend the unveiling of the Countdown project, Canada's first permanent monument to recognize survivors of sexual violence. It was created

through a partnership between the artists of Red Dress Productions and the Women's Sexual Assault Centre of Renfrew County, and made possible through funding from It's Never Okay. It's a beautiful mosaic of tens of thousands of stones, many of which have survivors' names written on the bottom. It honours those who have been affected by gender-based violence and commemorates those who have been lost.

Violence against women can happen anywhere, but we know that it disproportionately affects indigenous women and girls in Ontario and across the country. The high rate of violence against indigenous women is alarming and is not acceptable. Too many lives have been lost, too many families have suffered and too many lives are at risk. The time for leadership and action is now. That's why, earlier this year, we released a long-term strategy to end violence against indigenous women called Walking Together. It's an investment of \$100 million in new funding to raise awareness about violence and how to prevent violence and provide programs and community services that reflect priorities of indigenous leaders and communities.

Through Walking Together, we are introducing a program to support indigenous families in crisis and to help communities deal with the effects of intergenerational violence and trauma. We will ensure that indigenous women have the supports they need in the justice system. And we are expanding support services for indigenous women who experience violence, as well as healing and violence prevention programs for men.

We are also proud to be hosting the fifth national indigenous women's summit in March, right here in Toronto, and to continue to offer our support to the federal government's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The inquiry must be a positive and healing step towards reconciliation, where voices are heard, embraced and respected as we take action to ensure the cycle of violence comes to an end. Indigenous partners in Ontario are leading the way on this strategy, and we're honoured to support them on this journey.

We are also working with indigenous partners on the implementation of Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking. Human trafficking is a deplorable crime. It's a violation of one of our most basic human rights: to be in control of our own bodies. In June, we announced our anti-human trafficking strategy, which includes an investment of up to \$72 million. This strategy will increase awareness and coordination, and it will enhance justice sector initiatives and improve survivors' access to services. It's a comprehensive approach to a very complex problem. Work is under way across ministries, guided by the insights and experiences of survivors.

We recently announced the appointment of the director of the provincial Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office. That office will spearhead information sharing and collaboration across law enforcement, justice, social services, health, education and child welfare sectors. It will be led by Jennifer Richardson, a key voice

in the development of Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Unit and sexual exploitation strategy. She has developed specialized training tools that are used in North America, and she has lived experience as a survivor. Her experience and her expertise will be an asset as we work across government, with communities and survivors.

Gender-based violence must not be tolerated, and we are working hard to create a province where it does not exist.

Nous avons fait des progrès, mais il reste beaucoup à faire. Nous devons travailler ensemble. Nous devons rester vigilants.

We've made progress, but there's still a long way to go. We have work to do together. We have to be vigilant. We cannot let the language of sexism, misogyny and oppression become normalized in the public realm. We must recognize violence against women for what it is: It's an attack on our bodies and an attack on our spirits. It is an attack on equality.

On December 6, 1989, a gunman targeted women because they were women and because they were seeking the same opportunities as their male peers. To deny this fact and to deny women full equality is not acceptable in our society.

This government is committed to embracing real change, and we invite all Ontarians to join us in this journey.

Today, we remember the 14 young women whose lives were taken 27 years ago. We also remember the countless number of women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence in Ontario and Canada. And we dedicate ourselves to creating a province and a country where we can all live free from violence.

Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's time for responses.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I rise today to speak on behalf of the official opposition and the PC caucus to commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Twenty-seven years ago today, on December 6, 1989, 14 young women were brutally murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal. They were targeted by the perpetrator simply for being women. The tragedy of this event has resonated through the years and serves as an important reminder of the tragic consequences of violence against women.

As we stand together to mourn the loss of these 14 young women, we also reflect on the sad fact that violence against women continues to be an issue today. Some 67% of Canadians say they have personally known at least one woman who has experienced physical or sexual abuse. Every six days, a woman in Canada is killed by her partner. We know from YWCA Canada that there are 460,000 or more sexual assaults in Canada every year but that only about 3% are reported to the police.

We have also seen a shocking increase in the incidence of human sex trafficking in our communities,

particularly in Ontario, where 60% of all cases in Canada occur. It's a horrific crime. Some 90% of the victims are Canadian-born. The average age is 14. It is one of the fastest-growing crimes. The introduction of my private member's bill called Saving the Girl Next Door Act says it all. We need to do more on the human sex trafficking file.

These statistics show how much work still needs to be done to protect women and to provide resources so that they feel safe, supported and empowered to report violence. Legislators have to continue to make this a priority, and the government can do more.

The PC caucus has previously called on the government to use better risk assessment tools to flag high-risk offenders, which was recommended by the government's own Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. They need to notify crown attorneys when offenders refuse to sign their probation orders. There is no bigger red flag that a perpetrator is going to offend again than when he does not sign his probation orders.

1540

They need to restore the Partner Assault Response Program back to a 16-week model, and they need to introduce electronic monitoring of high-risk offenders, as outlined by my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke in his private member's bill, Bill 21. This, of course, was brought forward in response to the horrific murders that occurred in Renfrew county in his riding. What we found especially true in rural Ontario is that one probation officer once a week does not protect these women.

I sat on a select committee for over a year, as many colleagues in the Legislature today have sat with us: the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, from which there were many recommendations that were brought forward over a year ago to enact better protection for women.

We must also do more to support community organizations and shelters across the province, which do amazing work helping women find a peaceful life free of violence, which is what they deserve. They deserve to be free to live without fear in their own homes and in their own communities.

By all working together, we can prevent what happened at École Polytechnique from ever being repeated again, and we can build a province and a country that are free from violence against women and girls.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: On this day 27 years ago—December 6, 1989—14 young women were systematically, deliberately separated from their male classmates and murdered at École Polytechnique in Montreal. They were murdered because they were women; promising young women who were embarking on careers in fields traditionally dominated by men; young women full of hope and optimism about their future as full and equal participants in economic and civic life.

The man who gunned them down saw their optimism as a threat to male privilege. His extreme actions demonstrate the fear of loss of power and control, the

fear of equality, that is at the root of gender-based violence around the world.

Tonight there will be vigils in communities across Canada. Candles will be lit, tears will be shed and stories will be told as Canadians remember not only the women who were lost on December 6, 1989, but all the women who have died from gender-based violence this year and in years past. As painful and difficult as these vigils are, this national annual coming-together is critical to raise public awareness and mobilize change. The vigils serve as a grim and powerful reminder of the pervasiveness of gender-based violence across our province and our country and of our obligation to make the violence stop.

On this day, we express our gratitude to the courageous survivors and the grieving family members of victims for their willingness to speak publicly about their experiences and their loss, even in the face of frequent victim-blaming. Their stories show that violence against women is not a private, individual problem; it is a societal and public health crisis that afflicts every age and income group and every racial and ethnic community.

Many of us know a woman who has been killed. This weekend we learned the horrific news of the murder of Toronto physician Elana Fric-Shamji and of the charges that have been laid against her husband. Last September, we grieved over the brutal murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew county.

In my own community, I think of Angela Sedore, a much-loved grade 6 teacher at Ashley Oaks Public School in London who died at the hands of her ex-partner in January 2007. I think of Sonia El-Birani, a family home visitor with the Middlesex-London Health Unit who was slain by her husband in April 2012. I think of Lynda Shaw, the third-year mechanical engineering student who was raped, beaten and left to die along the 401 on her way back to Western University one Easter weekend in 1990.

The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Homes, with the University of Guelph, has worked to develop a femicide list to track the intentional killing of women and girls because they are women. In the past year alone, 20 women in Ontario were killed by men they knew. Often there are warning signs that could have prevented these murders. At least six women were killed by a man with whom they had no relationship, and another four women, three of them indigenous, were murdered, but their murders have not been solved.

This December 6, I call on this Liberal government to take three specific actions that will make real change. First, the government should move as soon as possible to allow my private member's bill to receive public input. The bill would provide up to 10 days of paid leave for employees experiencing violence—who are overwhelmingly women—so that they can see a doctor or a counselor, find a new place to live, or meet with the police or their lawyer. Too often, women feel trapped in the violence, unable to leave an abusive relationship because of what it will mean for themselves and their children. By

allowing women to leave without jeopardizing their employment, this bill will remove one of the most powerful barriers for women seeking to end a violent relationship.

Second, as called for by the UN's 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the government must commit to sustainable funding for efforts to end violence against women and girls. This morning, I revealed that the Family Court Support Worker Program, an incredibly valuable and effective program to help women leave their abusers—a program that already operates on a shoestring—has had its funding reduced. This is the kind of program that should be enhanced, not cut, if we are serious about ending violence against women.

Third, we must hold perpetrators accountable to the fullest extent possible, but we must also find ways to end the abuse. Evidence-based programs to change abusive behaviours, like Partner Assault Response, must be enhanced and expanded.

Speaker, first, let's mourn on this December 6, but on this National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, let's also unite in a collective commitment to make this province a safe and equal place for all women and girls.

PETITIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas a staff report has recommended Upper Canada District School Board close numerous schools across eastern Ontario including Leeds–Grenville; and

"Whereas access to quality local education is essential for rural communities to thrive; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education removed community impact considerations from pupil accommodation review guidelines in 2015; and

"Whereas local communities treasure their public schools and have been active participants in their continued operation, maintenance and success; and

"Whereas the Ontario government should focus on delivering quality, local education services to all communities, including rural Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"—to reinstate considerations of value to the local community and value to the local economy in pupil accommodation review guidelines; and

"—to work with all school boards, including Upper Canada District School Board, to modify the funding model to include appropriate funding that considers rural education opportunities, student busing times, accessible extracurricular and inter-school activities, a school's role as a community hub, and its value to the local economy."

I agree 100% with this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Charlie.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I would like to read into the record a petition put together by people in my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We are recommending that the province repeal the 'property tax rebate for vacant commercial and industrial buildings' under section 364 of the Municipal Act, 2001, and Ontario regulation 325/01."

I agree with this petition, Speaker. I have affixed my signature to it and I send it to the table via page Anne.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas in the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

"The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen;

"A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

"More the 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and

"Whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

"The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada;

"79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

"The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

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"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To request the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

"That the committee report back its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response."

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

"Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has the power to unilaterally alter local development decisions made by municipalities and their communities; and

"Whereas the city of Toronto is the largest city in Ontario; and

"Whereas the city of Toronto has a planning department composed of professional planners, an extensive legal department and 44 full-time city councillors directly elected by its citizens; and

"Whereas Toronto's city council voted overwhelmingly in February 2012 to request an exemption from the Ontario Municipal Board's jurisdiction;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the ability of the city of Toronto to handle its own urban planning and development; and

"Further, that the Ontario Municipal Board no longer have jurisdiction over the city of Toronto."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to add my signature and give it to Calida to be delivered to the table.

HYDRO RATES

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office;

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment;

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss;

"Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government's lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount;

"Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating;

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

"Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills."

I'm happy to sign this petition and give it to page Henry.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), one in eight Ontario schools is at risk of closure; and

"Whereas the value of a school to the local economy and community has been removed from the PARG; and

"Whereas the PARG outlines consultation requirements that are insufficient to allow for meaningful community involvement, including the establishment of community hubs; and

"Whereas school closures have a significant negative impact on families and their children, resulting in inequitable access to extracurricular activities and other essential school involvement, and after-school work opportunities; and

"Whereas school closures have devastating impacts on the growth and overall viability of communities across Ontario, in particular self-sustaining agricultural communities;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To place an immediate moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the PARG has been subject to a substantive review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the health of our communities and children."

I fully support this petition, sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Kaitlyn.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office; and

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

"Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

"Whereas the energy policies of this Liberal government ignored the advice of independent experts and

government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator, and resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province; and

"Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills."

I affix my signature and I thank you very much for the opportunity to present it on behalf of the people—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further petitions?

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Cindy Forster: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Fight for \$15 and Fairness.

"Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

"Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario's labour and employment laws:

"—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker's age, job or sector of employment;

"—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

"—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

"—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

"—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

"—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

"—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

"—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

"—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

"—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

"—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour."

I support this petition, affix my signature and will give it to page Kaitlyn.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Laurie Scott: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the Liberal government took office; and

"Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

"Whereas many rural customers will see delivery charges soaring by as much as 25% in 2017, which will increase their total hydro bills by up to 11.5%; and

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced into energy poverty, having to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians' energy bills."

Signed by people from all over my riding, including Cannington, Algonquin Highlands, Burnt River, Kinmount, Kirkfield, Beaverton and many more. I'll hand it to page Anne.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One."

I agree with this petition—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further petitions?

CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the province of Ontario has a plan and/or action to amend the legislation under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) regarding religious and conscientious exemption regulations;

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"Whereas the proposed and/or tabled amendment requiring 'education sessions' interferes with our informed consent rights as specified in Ontario's Health Care Consent Act, 1996, specifically 'Elements of consent' 11(1)3, 'The consent must be given voluntarily' and 4, 'The consent must not be obtained through misrepresentation or fraud;'

"Whereas the proposed and/or tabled amendment interferes with our constitutional rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

"Whereas vaccines are injected, complex biochemical compounds that carry a risk of injury and death;

"Whereas the province of Ontario and the government of Canada take no responsibility for vaccine injuries and deaths;

"Whereas education sessions are a waste of limited health care dollars that could be better spent elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Cease the passing of any legislation under the Immunization of School Pupils Act that would require Ontario residents who have made a religious or conscientious decision to exempt their child from any or all vaccinations under the act:

"(1) to submit to an 'education session' or

"(2) to submit to any other coerced and/or forced measures under the ISPA."

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm very proud to table this petition today that was done by many teenagers in my riding; not just teenagers, others, but teenagers were a major part. It reads as follows:

"Petition for OHIP Coverage for Out-of-Country Cancer Treatments for Justin Masotti #KeepJustinAlive.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 17-year-old Justin Masotti of Hamilton is battling an extremely rare form of brain cancer that has not responded to traditional cancer treatment;

"Whereas the alternative cancer treatments he is now receiving out of country appear to be having a positive impact on him;

"Whereas the huge costs already incurred by his family to fund his out-of-country treatments are not being covered by OHIP as they are considered experimental;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, on compassionate grounds, fund the transport and medical costs associated with the out-of-country cancer treatment of Justin Masotti."

I couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to page Fallon to bring to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROMOTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROMOTION DU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Mr. Ballard moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts with respect to housing and planning / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement du territoire.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The minister has moved third reading of Bill 7. Back to the minister.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I rise in the House today to begin third reading debate on the proposed Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016, known as Bill 7. I'll be sharing my time today with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of Bill 7. This legislation was originally introduced by our government this past May. I had the privilege of reintroducing it in September, as a key component of a suite of legislative priorities to be achieved over the fall session for this government.

The Promoting Affordable Housing Act is a landmark piece of legislation that, if passed, is designed to increase housing access and affordability for all Ontarians.

Before I go into more details about the bill, I'd like to take a moment to thank those who have strengthened this piece of legislation to where it stands today at third reading.

Of course, the consultation process on this legislation far predates its first introduction back in the spring and its reintroduction this past September. To properly acknowledge all those who have contributed to shaping this legislation, I have to go back to two important efforts carried out by our government in recent years: the striking of an expert panel on homelessness, and the updating of our Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

As part of our Poverty Reduction Strategy—a strategy I'm now responsible for—Ontario set a long-term goal to end homelessness in this province. It's an ambitious goal, but it's the right thing to do. In order to achieve this goal, we struck an Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness. The province worked with the expert panel to get prac-

tical advice on how best to approach this goal, beginning with ways to define and measure homelessness. The panel was established to provide expert advice to government on definitions, enumeration and setting a homelessness-related target, while also building capacity within the sector.

In addition to setting a target to end chronic homelessness by 2025, we set four priority areas to guide provincial action, focusing on chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, indigenous homelessness, and homelessness following transitions from places like hospitals, prisons and the child welfare system.

We heard many voices and perspectives on the panel from experts and from people who have been homeless. Working with the panel and meeting with organizations dedicated to helping the homeless and poor was a moving experience, and one that left me even more determined to do something about the problem.

I'd like to take a moment now to thank the 40 presenters who presented to the panel. They're far too numerous to name here today, but they brought a diversity of perspectives on homelessness that helped to inform the panel's recommendations. These presenters include: youth and seniors, women and families, LGBTTTQ communities, veterans, people with physical disabilities, people with mental health issues, addictions and trauma, new immigrants, refugees and racialized communities, people with lived experience, victims of the domestic violence, sex trade workers, French-language communities, aboriginal peoples, northern and rural communities, and urban and suburban communities.

I want to take this moment to thank the experts from the panel for their insights and hard work, including Pedro Barata, Maya Chacaby, Michael Creek, Dr. Cheryl Forchuk, Dr. Stephen Gaetz, Dr. Stephen Hwang, Dr. Kwame McKenzie, Mike Nadeau, Joe-Anne Priel, Bruce Rivers, Aseefa Sarang, Michael Shapcott, Brian Smith and Simone Thibault.

Finally, I want to thank my predecessors, in both of my ministerial portfolios, who co-chaired the panel: the member for London North Centre and the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your contributions to the conversation we're continuing here today with this legislation.

By now, my colleagues in this chamber know that improving access to affordable housing and ending homelessness, especially youth homelessness, are subjects that I hold dear and near to my heart. We know that life on the streets leaves our neighbours vulnerable to serious health crisis, violence and involvement in the criminal justice system. We also know that even brief stints of homelessness leave a lifetime of impact on our neighbours who experience it. And we know that one size does not fit all in terms of solutions to tackling housing and homelessness.

That's why we're building on the foundation laid out in the first Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. The update to the strategy announced this past March builds

on the important work of the first strategy, while creating new tools for increasing affordable housing and ending chronic homelessness. The update to the strategy is bold and transformative, and invests \$178 million in new dollars over three years to help ensure that the people of Ontario have access to an affordable home that is well suited to their needs.

The updated strategy takes into account the input the government received at 38 stakeholder meetings during the summer of 2015 and from 113 formal written submissions that reflect the housing needs of Ontarians across the province.

I would like to take a moment to thank all of those who shared their perspectives on the updated strategy, whether through meetings or formal submissions, to help strengthen our government's long-term efforts in increasing the supply of affordable housing in the province. From this essential feedback and under the strategy, we are making key investments and policy improvements across a range of targeted projects.

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For example, we're modernizing Ontario's social housing system to better meet the needs of tenants and providers, and to create more integrated and inclusive communities. Currently, Ontarians in need of housing assistance rely primarily on rent-geared-to-income assistance, which is most often tied to specific units at specific addresses. So we're working on a framework for a portable housing benefit that would give people receiving housing assistance more flexibility to choose where they live. We hope to have that in place by the summer of 2017.

In September, our government announced a portable housing benefit pilot program to help survivors of domestic violence escape unsafe situations and receive support to immediately find housing in their communities. We're piloting this program in 22 communities across Ontario and providing ongoing assistance to approximately 1,000 survivors of domestic violence per year under the pilot program.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken some important steps to help make everyday life a little easier for individuals and families in need of flexible and reliable supportive housing options. One of these steps is the investment of over \$100 million over three years to Ontario's supportive housing system, focusing on the four provincial priority areas and supporting our goal to end chronic homelessness. We've heard from our sector partners that this is where the need is greatest, so we've taken action. As a result of this investment, up to 4,000 families and individuals will receive housing allowances and the wraparound services they need.

Some 1,500 new supportive housing units will also be constructed over the longer term. To guide this work, the province is developing a supportive housing policy framework that will help modernize Ontario's supportive housing system into one that is based on client choice, enabling people to live as independently as possible in their communities.

We're also developing an indigenous housing strategy in partnership with indigenous communities. We know that First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples are significantly overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness in Canada. A significant challenge is ensuring that culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services are accessible to indigenous people across the province, which is why a unique strategy is needed. Our government will continue our sustained engagement with First Nation, Métis and Inuit partners to develop this important strategy.

The investments I've mentioned are working to strengthen Ontario communities by promoting a housing market that serves the full range of housing needs and income levels, protecting tenants and encouraging private sector building. But no matter how much we invest, it's not the dollars that matter, but the lives enriched by the choices we make. And there is still a long road ahead of us. That's why we're proposing a suite of policy and legislative tools through Bill 7 that we hope will have a meaningful impact on affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, during our government's extensive consultation on the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy update, we heard about the need to foster diverse and inclusive communities. To help reach this goal, we've provided a range of planning and financial and other tools through the Promoting Affordable Housing Act to help municipalities create more affordable housing.

One of the most impactful new tools we're proposing is inclusionary zoning. The proposed changes to the Planning Act would, if passed, give municipalities the option to require affordable housing units to be included in residential developments. Municipalities would outline their requirements for inclusionary zoning in official plan policies and zoning bylaws. We want to help municipalities ensure that they have a range of housing options that will give their citizens better choices.

Inclusionary zoning is just one of the many tools that the province is moving ahead with to increase the supply of affordable housing. We've consulted extensively over the summer with our stakeholders and the public on the legislation and potential regulatory content to support inclusionary zoning. We met with various stakeholders representing the municipal, planning, housing, non-profit and development sectors. We received over 65 formal written submissions from all sectors.

I'd like to thank all who participated in these conversations with me and staff over the summer. While they're too numerous to name, the insights provided by stakeholders from all corners of the province have helped shed light on how best to move forward on inclusionary zoning. We know that these different sectors have different perspectives about how inclusionary zoning should be tailored to Ontario, but these conversations have helped reinforce that we are on the right track when it comes to this tool, not just in urban centres like Toronto but smaller communities as well.

Here in Toronto, we have voices like Mitch Cohen of Daniels Corp., who said that inclusionary zoning is "the

only way to ensure that affordable housing will be built across this city."

In my own suburban backyard of Newmarket–Aurora, local regional Councillor and deputy mayor John Taylor has said that inclusionary zoning "provides us with a real tool, a tangible tool, to bring the development community to the table around affordable housing in each and every development, if we so choose."

In the research community, inclusionary zoning has the support of organizations like the Wellesley Institute, whose Greg Suttor has said this: "It will tend to create more of a social mix in development.... If new development only serves the upper half of the income distribution, that's not as healthy as if we build cities that house a bit more of everybody."

In the development community, we've heard from voices like Ben Myers, senior vice-president of Fortress Real Developments, who said this: "I think developers ... have ... a responsibility to build the type of housing that the people want and that people need...."

"A bit of our profit and a bit of our space ... in development projects should be used for low-income families. I have always been a supporter of inclusionary zoning."

Speaker, the message is clear: Inclusionary zoning is a necessary tool that will change the affordable housing landscape in Ontario. Of course, no legislation is perfect. As legislators, we do the best we can by inviting as many voices to the table as possible and by examining ideas together.

Over the past couple of weeks at the Standing Committee on Social Policy, we've heard from a number of individuals and organizations across Ontario about this proposed new tool. I'd like to thank a number of them now for their help in strengthening this legislation through public consultation at committee. They include the city of Toronto, the Ontario Home Builders' Association, the Building Industry and Land Development Association, the Niagara Home Builders' Association, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, Trillium Housing, the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, Social Planning Toronto, ACORN Canada, All IN, the Real Property Association of Canada, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, and Habitat for Humanity. Legislation is always strengthened by broad consultation at every stage of its development, and I thank everyone who took the time to appear at committee and share their feedback on ways to strengthen this bill.

I also want to thank the members of this Legislature who brought such thoughtful questions and commentary to the second reading debate on this bill, helping us identify areas of this legislation to approve and representing the views of their constituents. They include Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Windsor–Tecumseh, Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Oxford, Toronto–Danforth, York–Simcoe, London–Fanshawe, Peterborough, Prince Edward–Hastings, London West,

Parkdale–High Park, Eglinton–Lawrence, Nepean–Carleton, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Leeds–Grenville, Barrie, Guelph, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Kitchener Centre, Davenport, Whitby–Oshawa, Thornhill, Beaches–East York, Niagara Falls, Wellington–Halton Hills, Toronto Centre, Essex, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Don Valley East, Perth–Wellington, Nickel Belt, Sarnia–Lambton—it's an extensive list—Windsor West, Cambridge, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, Kitchener–Waterloo, Scarborough–Agin-court, Oshawa, Halton, Thunder Bay–Superior North—almost there, Speaker—York South–Weston, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Trinity–Spadina, Huron–Bruce, Algoma–Manitoulin, Pickering–Scarborough East, Scarborough–Rouge River, Nipissing, Hamilton Mountain, Richmond Hill and Chatham–Kent Essex.

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Mr. Speaker, if you were counting along with me, our colleagues who have already participated in debate on this bill represent nearly half of the ridings in our province. They also represent a diversity of geography, constituency and unique local need. We have worked hard to reflect in this bill and its amendments their feedback. I want to thank each of those members for their contributions to the debate on this legislation and tell them that we have listened.

After hearing these views and perspectives, our government brought forward amendments to the bill to make it even stronger. As this bill returns to the chamber for third reading, I'd like to spend a few minutes discussing the improvements made through the committee process.

Throughout our consultation and debate, we heard about the need to support transparency and accountability in inclusionary zoning policies. Therefore, we are proposing that prior to adopting inclusionary zoning official plan policies, a municipality must prepare a municipal assessment report to be reviewed every five years. This will help to establish a base for municipal inclusionary zoning programs, and foster support and awareness within the community. A five-year review will allow municipalities to reassess and refine their inclusionary zoning programs as needed.

One of the provisions originally proposed under Bill 7 would not have permitted appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board of official plan policies and zoning bylaws related to inclusionary zoning, except by the minister. To respond to what we heard and to align with good land use planning practices and principles, we brought forward amendments that would clarify that typical zoning matters such as building height and density can be appealed, even if they are used as measures and incentives in inclusionary zoning bylaws. We want to protect the appeal rights of community members so that they can continue to respond to the planning aspects of proposed developments.

Throughout the consultations and debate, we heard a common view that municipalities should be given the flexibility to tailor inclusionary zoning to local social and

economic conditions. We want to ensure that they have this flexibility. That includes finding a balance between inclusionary zoning policies and section 37. Section 37 of the Planning Act permits a municipality to authorize increases in allowable height and/or density through the zoning bylaw in return for community benefits like daycare spaces, transit improvements and heritage preservation.

As it was originally written, Bill 7 would have restricted municipalities applying inclusionary zoning from using section 37, except as provided for by regulation by the minister. We heard and, again, we listened. That's why we put forward a motion to allow municipalities to use section 37 in conjunction with inclusionary zoning. This would be subject to criteria that may be identified through regulation, to help ensure fairness to both developers and municipalities.

Inclusionary zoning has been extensively used by communities around the world, including in England and in over 500 municipalities in the United States. We want to make sure that our framework allows inclusionary zoning to be implemented in a way that is fair and that works for all Ontario communities. I applaud the groups and individuals who have fostered and pushed the conversation forward on inclusionary zoning.

Bill 7 would originally have prohibited inclusionary zoning units from being constructed in a different location from the proposed development. Throughout the consultations and in the committee process, we heard from all sides that while this was a step in the right direction, it wasn't practical in all cases; for instance, small-scale developments. As a result, we're proposing an amendment that would allow municipalities to permit construction of off-site inclusionary zoning units, subject to criteria that may be set out in regulation. This would provide greater flexibility in delivering affordable housing units to communities.

Since the introduction of Bill 7 and after reviewing feedback from our consultations, we have given further consideration to the province's ability to exempt, through regulation, certain developments and development projects from inclusionary zoning by-laws. For instance, existing buildings not subject to a development application or projects with development proposals submitted to the municipality before the municipality passes an inclusionary zoning by-law could be exempt.

We also heard concerns from our co-operative and non-profit housing stakeholders on this topic as well. These organizations currently provide substantial amounts of affordable housing and have, therefore, asked that they be exempt from inclusionary zoning.

I believe all of these amendments that we've put forward respond to various input that we've received and will make Bill 7 more effective. They help to level the playing field and provide more flexibility for communities to implement inclusionary zoning in a way that meets their unique needs and reflects local circumstances. We recognize that all communities are unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Most important-

ly, we value the input of our stakeholders, and our recent action with respect to the Planning Act portion of this bill demonstrates that.

While the topic of inclusionary zoning has garnered most of the attention, there are other important aspects of Bill 7 that we believe will significantly contribute to our affordable housing supply and create a better range of choices.

We're proposing changes to the Development Charges Act to exempt secondary suites in new homes from development charges. Secondary suites are a source of affordable rental units for many low- to moderate-income renters. I've always believed in allowing secondary suites in established neighbourhoods. We know that they're already being built in many neighbourhoods, but the proposed amendment would support increasing the supply of rental accommodation.

Our proposed reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act and the Housing Services Act would, if passed, help to further modernize social housing and create more vibrant and inclusive communities across the province. My parliamentary assistant, the member for Trinity-Spadina, will elaborate on the benefits of the proposed amendments to these two pieces of legislation.

I'd like to thank the committee members for their hard work in reviewing these amendments and for sending a strengthened bill back to the whole House for debate.

The package of reforms that we're proposing reflects the significant input we received from municipalities, stakeholders and the public at large. It takes into account the changing needs and landscapes of our communities. The bill reflects the feedback that we heard during debate and at the standing committee. We continue to have conversations with our citizens, stakeholders and other levels of government about creating affordable housing.

I'd like to conclude by reminding this House that Ontario, through legislation like Bill 7, is answering the call to provide more affordable housing across the province. We know that when people have a home, they're healthier, more able to pursue employment and better equipped to participate in, and contribute to, their communities. When one family achieves housing stability, it creates a domino effect where others do the same.

With the right tools, we can build a housing sector in Ontario that leaves no one behind. Our ultimate goals—increasing the supply of affordable housing and ending homelessness in Ontario—are bold and filled with obstacles, but they are possible.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our municipal partners, other provinces, territories and the federal government, as well as the private sector, to improve housing outcomes for the people of Ontario.

The actions that we've taken today can transform Ontario's housing system of the future and bring an end to chronic homelessness in our lifetime. I want to thank everyone who brought forward their ideas for making this legislation as strong as possible and as responsive to the everyday needs of the people of Ontario. I urge all members to vote for the passing of this landmark bill.

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Now I'd like to turn the floor over to my parliamentary assistant, the member for Trinity-Spadina.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

I recognize the member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I wish I could say that I was pleased to rise to speak to this bill, but less than 24 hours ago, we were debating this bill in committee. That means that the bill has not been reprinted and the MPPs who weren't on the committee are being asked to debate and later vote on a bill without knowing what amendments were passed and which were voted down.

When I checked earlier today, not only was there no draft Hansard available for MPPs from yesterday's committee meeting; the Hansard from last week's hearing still hasn't been publicly published.

Even for those of us who were in committee, it means we had less than 24 hours to consider the new version of the bill and prepare for this debate.

Housing is a complex issue. It isn't easy to solve, especially when the affordability problem has reached a crisis level like it has here in Ontario. We heard from a number of people in committee that if inclusionary zoning is not implemented properly, it simply won't work. Municipalities will choose not to pass the inclusionary zoning bylaws, developers will just choose to build somewhere else; or, worse, it will force the cost of all other units up dramatically, making our affordability problem worse.

To get this right, the government should have researched this issue intensively, they should have done economic modelling, and the legislative committee should have been given the opportunity to have extensive committee hearings, ample time to draft the amendments, and time to work through those amendments as a committee. Sadly, that is not what has happened.

In a few minutes, I will go into the concerns we raised in the committee and the amendments that we put forward to address them. But first I want to raise some concerns about the process this bill has gone through over the past two weeks.

As you know, one of the biggest changes in this bill is the ability for municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning. This is not a new idea. The MPP for Parkdale-High Park has been introducing private member's bills on inclusionary zoning since 2009. For those seven years, the government didn't think it was an urgent issue.

Last spring, the government introduced Bill 204, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act. It passed first reading but it wasn't brought forward for debate. Over the summer, the ministry held consultations on the bill and heard a number of challenges to the way it was written, including concerns about the fact that it prohibited affordable housing units being built off-site or developers providing municipalities with funds that could be used for affordable housing instead of building the units themselves.

As we all know, at the end of the summer, the government prorogued the Legislature, killing all of the bills, including this one. The Minister of Housing reintroduced it as Bill 7. Oddly, despite all the consultations over the summer, it was word for word the same as Bill 204.

Over the next two months, the bill was debated periodically, at times going a week without any debate. On November 1, it passed second reading and was referred to the social policy committee. Still, the government didn't seem to think it was urgent. The first date that was proposed for a subcommittee meeting was 10 days later. The subcommittee met on November 14. We put together a report that provided three days of public hearings so many people would get more than a week's notice that they would be appearing. We agreed that the Minister of Housing would be invited to speak to the bill and answer some of the outstanding questions on how he envisioned inclusionary zoning would be implemented.

The following day, the committee met to consider the all-party subcommittee report. The government members of the committee used their majority to vote it down and introduce their own motion. They blocked the minister from attending, shortened the notice period and reduced the number of public hearings. I moved a motion to again request the minister to come and speak to the committee, but the government refused to support it. So the next week, instead of beginning hearings, we were once again back to committee organization.

The government introduced a new motion which shortened the hearings down to one day. The committee passed that motion, but the government still introduced an even tighter motion in the Legislature to force this bill through. It cut timelines for stakeholders presenting to the bill. It ended up with only two real hours for the committee to discuss the clause-by-clause, because after two hours of debate, all debate was cut off and every question had to be put. Then they forced a vote, which recessed the committee and used up the last of our debate time. Mr. Speaker, if the government had accepted the original subcommittee report, stakeholders would have had more time to prepare their presentations. With the additional dates, we likely would have heard from more people. We would have had more time to prepare the amendments. We would have heard from the minister to answer some of the outstanding questions, and the whole thing would have put us, at the most, one day later in reporting it back to the Legislature.

They can't manage eHealth, they can't manage hydro, and it appears now they can't even manage the legislative calendar. The government is rushing through legislation, and incidentally, they are making mistakes. Schedule 6 of this bill is repealing a section of the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act that we passed this time last year because it is "no longer needed because the proposed amendment has already been carried out through another statute." That means they made the same change in two different bills and now are having to go back to delete it from one. Bill 68, the municipal omnibus bill that we debated this morning, contains corrections to a bill we passed just last spring.

The people of Ontario deserve better than this. The goal shouldn't be to see how fast we can get legislation through or to report the highest number of bills passed at the end of the session. A high number is pretty meaningless if you make mistakes in all the legislation and have to go back and fix them. In fact, when you make mistakes in every bill, the people and organizations that are impacted start hoping that the number of bills passed is much, much smaller.

I want to raise a section of the bill that originally appeared to be a mistake but after yesterday looks like it may have been a deliberate secret agenda. That is the section that allows the government to force inclusionary zoning on municipalities. When we first asked the minister's staff about this section, they said they weren't even aware that it was in the bill. After the government blocked our request to have the minister come to committee, he was kind of enough to give me a private briefing, and I thought we had a good discussion. I asked him about forcing inclusionary zoning on municipalities, and he said that he couldn't think of a circumstance where he would do that. Based on that briefing, I believed the government might accept our amendment to remove that section or even put forward one of their own. So I was a little shocked yesterday when the government members of the committee spoke strongly against our amendment to remove the section, arguing that they might force inclusionary zoning on municipalities when it was in the provincial interest. This is contrary to everything the government has said about this being an optional tool for municipalities. It is contrary to everything that they said about letting municipalities judge where and when inclusionary zoning is appropriate.

Housing is a serious issue, and it isn't one where the government should be playing games. It's also not an issue we should be rushing. It is complex, and the problems in one part of the housing spectrum impact all parts of the housing market. We should be taking time, doing the research and getting it right.

Ontario is facing a housing crisis. There are 171,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing. That's an increase of over 45,000 families since this government took office. The average wait time for families has grown by almost a year and a half. According to the CMHC report released last week, the rental vacancy rate is down to 2.1%, the lowest rate since 2001, because new units added to the rental apartment stock fell short of increases in rental demand. Our rental developers are building; they just aren't building in Ontario. This shortfall was one of the reasons given for a 3% increase in rents last year.

Over the year, housing prices increased another 12%. An article on Friday reported that the average price of a detached home in Toronto is \$1.35 million. But it also reported that it's not just a Toronto problem. In the 905 area communities surrounding Toronto, a detached home with a yard now averages over \$950,000. The article also reported, "The strongest November price gains were in the lower end of the market in townhouses and condos,

which saw region-wide average growth of 24% and 15% respectively.” Yet, the government continues to make decision after decision that forces up the cost of housing, meaning that the families that were just able to afford to make ends meet are now in need of government assistance.

Just last week, the city of Hamilton announced that they are restricting the Housing Stability Benefit program because the provincially funded budget is almost empty, due in part to spiking hydro rates.

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The general manager of emergency community services called it a dire situation. Due to the high demand for assistance with hydro bills, almost 90% of the money in the program is gone, with four months left to go until the end of the fiscal year. The city estimates that this will impact about 600 low-income people who need assistance, and they are predicting there will be evictions as a result.

Marla Brown, a staff lawyer at the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, said, “Without that help, there will probably be more evictions.... That’s not something you want to see, especially during the winter months.”

Mr. Speaker, energy poverty has become common. People are paying more for their hydro than for their mortgage, and many families in Toronto can’t even dream of buying a house in the city where they work.

I received an email from one person last week who said, “As a person on fixed income, there is only so much of your personal stuff you can sell on Kijiji to keep your head above water.” Another one told me that they had gone to the bank to increase their personal line of credit just to pay their hydro bills.

While these people are suffering, the government is patting themselves on the back and continuing to forge ahead with decisions that increase the cost of housing. Increasing development charges, more red tape, land restrictions, high hydro rates, inclusionary zoning, plus section 37, on the same house: Each of these things adds on to the cost of housing. The government is talking about net-zero homes, which are forecast to be an additional \$30,000 to \$50,000 on the cost of each home.

Inclusionary zoning, while it may build some affordable units, is not going to solve the problem. As AMO president Lynn Dollin said during committee, “It should be acknowledged that it is not a panacea solution. It will not meet the housing needs of all Ontarians in need in all areas of the province. More funding will still be needed to increase the supply of affordable housing in a meaningful way.”

Inclusionary zoning is not free housing. Someone is paying the cost. It will be either the municipalities through waiving development charges and other fees, or it will be passed on to the new homeowners and renters, making the housing less affordable. As Jon Whyte of the Niagara home builders said in committee, “I want to be clear that while I support the objective to create more affordable housing units, these units do come at a cost. My company does not have access to affordable concrete.

We cannot buy affordable wood, and our hard-working tradespeople on site every day do not build every 10th house at a special discounted, affordable wage.”

The government looks at each decision in isolation and decides that the benefits outweigh the cost, but when you add them all together, the result is a crisis in housing. The result is 171,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing. The result is adult children who can’t afford to leave their parents’ home. The result is parents who spend hours commuting because they can’t afford to live near where they work. The result is people who are living from paycheque to paycheque and are just one hydro bill away from losing their home.

Last week, Paul Smetanin, an economist and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, described his latest pilgrimage as trying to “find someone in Ontario’s provincial bureaucracy who can make housing affordability a priority.”

Many of the presenters at the committee pointed out that in order to make housing affordable, you need adequate supply. They pointed out that for inclusionary zoning to work, you need a healthy building industry, and yet this bill contains a number of measures that could further discourage building.

Nowhere in the bill does it grandfather development applications which have already been submitted. In fact, after they introduced the bill, the government consulted about that very question, so clearly, those applications are not exempt. Despite the stakeholders, such as the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, who were clear about the need to exempt applications in process, the government chose not to make any changes to the bill.

When we introduced an amendment that would encourage building by providing developers with certainty that the rules and costs would not change partway through the application process, the government voted it down.

If builders are forced to withdraw their applications and redo them to adapt to inclusionary zoning, or worse, abandon planned projects, it will make our housing supply problem worse, further driving up the price of housing. There are already too many policies in Ontario that discourage the development we need.

Ontario rental housing providers will tell you that they are building; they just aren’t building here. Yet in the clause-by-clause, the government amended the bill to allow the inclusionary zoning and section 37 on the same house, despite the warnings about the impacts.

In committee, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers said, “FRPO also strongly supports the restriction of the use of section 37 of the Planning Act for inclusionary zoning projects. Requiring units to be rented at less than market rents already impacts the financial feasibility of any development. Restricting section 37 will partially offset these financial impacts of inclusionary zoning by helping to reduce the costs of development for new rental housing.”

The Ontario Home Builders’ Association said, “With respect to the double dipping, we’re concerned that if

those go through and municipalities are allowed to access both section 37 and inclusionary units, this may further exacerbate the problem of under-zoning in the exact locations where we're trying to encourage growth."

They are both valid points about how this policy will impact housing, and the government simply ignored them.

We also heard from builders that more flexibility was needed than the bill provided. The bill, as introduced both times, prohibited affordable housing units from being built at another location and prohibited developers from providing the municipality with funds for affordable housing in lieu of building permits.

Almost every presenter to the committee agreed that there were circumstances where the flexibility of cash-in-lieu or building units off-site is needed, such as estate-type developments far from transit, or condo buildings with pools, concierges, valet parking and other services that have to be paid by the condo fees.

We understand the goal of having inclusive mixed neighbourhoods, but there are times when it simply doesn't work. For instance, the presentation from the city of Toronto pointed to the condominium units at the Shangri-La Hotel, where the maintenance costs alone would make the units unaffordable for most people.

Councillor Ana Bailão said, "We must also recognize that some developments would not be suited to inclusionary zoning and must be dealt with differently. In cases where very high operating costs or a small number of units may make providing and operating affordable housing challenging or unsustainable, we strongly recommend the province allow cash-in-lieu and off-site housing in place of affordable housing.

"Here I caution you not to create feel-good policy but actually real-results policy. This is where we might fail."

As the presenter from Social Planning Toronto said during the committee, "In many cases, the buildings that would be subject to inclusionary zoning are high-end buildings with fancy finishes and high condo fees, things that are not going to function very well with the provision of affordable housing. Homeowners won't be able to afford the high condo fees. Organizations that purchase those buildings to try to rent them out as affordable home rental won't be able to afford those fees and could apply those resources better to more appropriate housing for those folks if we had a cash-in-lieu or off-site development provision."

In developing this amendment, we looked at the inclusionary zoning policies in Boston, Chicago, Denver and San Francisco, which all allow cash-in-lieu. Our amendment included accountability measures based on those that the government put forward in Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, just one year ago, which would place the funds into a special account, only to be used for affordable housing and to be reported on annually with a statement including not only the balance of the fund but a detailed list of any expenditures out of the fund.

Adding the flexibility of cash-in-lieu was recommended in committee by the city of Toronto, the Co-

operative Housing Federation, ACORN, Habitat for Humanity, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, AMO and others. Yet, during the clause-by-clause yesterday, the government used their majority to block our amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give an example of how that will impact the housing industry.

Last week, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers held their annual MAC Awards, the Marketing, Achievement and Construction Awards. This ceremony showcases the pride that rental housing providers have in providing great homes for their residents. These are people who want to provide more good housing, if only the government would get the red tape out of the way.

During the awards, Iggy Kaneff was presented with a lifetime achievement award. He told the story of how he immigrated to Canada and started by building his own home, followed quickly by his first development, which contained a total of two homes. Under this bill, when it was introduced, one of these two homes would have had to pay the entire cost of the other one being affordable. After clause-by-clause, there is now a choice of one house paying for another one, or he could have bought another piece of land and the two houses could pay the cost of a third house and the land. It isn't much of an option.

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The reality is that if Iggy was starting with this legislation in place, he likely couldn't have built those two houses that started his company. Ontario would have been deprived of all of the housing he has built over the years, all of the rental properties and all of the contributions that he has made to education and charity in our community.

We put forward amendments that would have let developments like Iggy's succeed, such as our amendment to exempt developments of nine or less units, which the government voted down. Our amendment to allow cash-in-lieu would have allowed each of his houses to contribute to affordable housing without paying the full cost of the other unit.

We also put forward an amendment that would have balanced inclusive neighbourhoods with the need to provide as much affordable housing as possible in a way that works. Developers would have been allowed to build off-site as long as it was within 1.6 kilometres, or one mile, of the original development. Unlike the amendment that the government put forward, our amendment encourages inclusive neighbourhoods and development near transit.

In their written submission, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada said, "There will be cases, however, where the ongoing costs of providing affordable housing in a particularly expensive new development are prohibitive and would significantly limit the affordability of the units. In these cases, we feel the public good would be better served if, at the discretion of the municipality, the inclusionary zoning units were developed as a standalone building off-site but within a reasonable distance from the original project."

The government said that they were voting against the NDP motion containing cash-in-lieu because they wanted to create more inclusive neighbourhoods, but then they voted against our motion that would have helped accomplish that. It's clear they weren't really considering the amendments and whether they would make the bill work better.

We also put forward practical amendments to exclude developments of nine or less units where there were not enough units to share the costs of inclusionary zoning, so that the impact on the housing price would be significant, as well as result in a very small number of affordable housing units in one location, which would increase the difficulty of operating and maintaining the units. We based this threshold on inclusionary zoning policies in Boston; Burlington, Vermont; Chicago; San Francisco; and Washington, D.C., which all exempt developments of less than 10 units.

In the same amendment, we exempted residential developments which could have been accidentally captured under inclusionary zoning, even if it is not appropriate, such as student residences, long-term-care homes and supportive group-living residences. This is similar to the inclusionary zoning policies in Boston; Burlington, Vermont; Chicago; and Denver. All exempt certain types of residential developments such as student dormitories, subsidized seniors' housing and housing provided by government agencies. But in spite of speaking in favour of the motion, the government, again, voted it down.

I want to focus on the exemption of one type of development in particular. Our amendment exempted non-profit affordable housing providers as prescribed by regulation. That would have given the minister the ability to prescribe specific non-profit housing providers, such as Habitat for Humanity, or specific types of non-profit affordable housing, but the amendment would have made the intention of the legislation clear.

During public consultation, the need for this amendment was raised by several groups who are already working to provide affordable housing to those in need, including the co-op housing federation and Trillium Housing. As Habitat for Humanity, in their written submission, said, "Non-profit affordable ownership providers like Habitat for Humanity, Options for Homes, Trillium Housing and others are already delivering what inclusionary zoning is intended to achieve: affordable housing."

They went on to say, "There is a risk of unintended consequences for the productivity of our programs if the legislation and municipal bylaws for inclusionary zoning result in imposing requirements and conditions intended for market-oriented development projects on non-profit affordable housing projects and programs."

Trillium Housing pointed out that if they are not specifically exempted, they will end up spending thousands on lawyers to work out agreements with municipalities, which is money that otherwise would have gone to providing affordable housing.

Our amendment, which the government voted down, was about using affordable housing money effectively so

that it helps as many people as possible—the same thing that we've been advocating for on natural gas and insurance for housing providers. We've heard from housing providers across Ontario that are being overcharged for natural gas and insurance because the government forces them to purchase it through the Housing Services Corp. We put forward an amendment that would help housing providers save money by allowing them to opt out of purchasing services through the Housing Services Corp. if they can obtain them at a better cost.

A report from the city of Toronto found that they could save \$6.3 million in a single year if they were allowed to purchase natural gas directly rather than through the Housing Services Corp. Hamilton found that they could save \$1.1 million. Niagara, Stratford, Oxford county, Waterloo region, the region of Peel, Thunder Bay and many others have all said that they could save money and provide more housing if the government would let them opt out and purchase these services at the best cost.

Approximately 100 providers are already obtaining insurance from another source, but they are paying the Housing Services Corp. a fee equivalent to 2.5% of the premium just to be allowed to opt out. This is money that should be going to provide social housing. If Toronto Community Housing put the money into fixing the units that are currently boarded up because they are unlivable, they could have an extra 1,300 units every year.

The government says that misspending at the Housing Services Corp. has been solved. But if you looked at the spending just in the last six months of the year, it's clear the problem hasn't gone away. There were, once again, multiple trips to Europe. There are charges for the CEO travelling to Santa Barbara, where he expensed a \$300-a-night hotel; charges for travel to Victoria, British Columbia, where he paid for preferred seats on the flight, only to pay a change fee and to select a new preferred seat so that he could stay for dinner; and charges for three nights at the Fairmont in Montreal. We have a flight receipt for the CEO to travel to England from June 13 to June 20, but there are additional charges in Manchester, England, on June 26 and June 30. Did he travel to England twice in this one month?

It's also interesting that there are charges to put gas into an HSC vehicle, despite the fact that they responded to a freedom-of-information request stating that they do not have any vehicles.

The Housing Service Corp.'s revenues come from local housing providers, so any money that is wasted or lost through bad investments is money that was intended to provide housing for people in need. If the Housing Services Corp. is doing a good job, as the government claims, this would confirm it. If not, it will help reduce waste from social housing money, so that the money can instead be used to help people in need.

Our amendment would have helped municipalities that are already struggling to make ends meet. Instead, the government voted this amendment down and, through this bill, added new costs on municipalities.

Currently, the province is responsible for enforcing residential rental property standards in unorganized terri-

tories and municipalities without a property standards bylaw. This bill instead shifts that responsibility on to small and rural municipalities that don't have the resources to do it.

In a written submission to the committee, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association pointed out that 145 municipal governments currently do not enforce residential rental maintenance standards. As they said in their submission: "These are rural municipalities, many of which are in the north, where there is a lack of fiscal and human resources capacity to take on these tasks. Conducting investigations, defending work orders, and prosecuting non-compliance require staff capacity, training and fiscal resources that are beyond what many small and rural municipal governments can afford."

During his presentation to the committee, Kenn Hale of the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario said, "Making them enforce some provincial equivalent of the bylaw without giving them any resources is really condemning the tenants in those areas to a complete lack of enforcement."

A number of municipalities have now passed a resolution which says, in part, that they call on the government to "halt the download of enforcement responsibility for residential rental maintenance standards proposed in schedule 5 of Bill 7, in light of the significant fiscal challenge each municipality will face to provide this service to the public in a cost-effective manner."

In her presentation to the committee, the AMO president, Lynn Dollin, also spoke against the change.

Despite all of these efforts to the contrary, and despite both the NDP and the PC caucus voting against these sections of the bill, the government used their majority to force them through.

This is just one of the new costs that Bill 7 dumps on municipalities. There are also new costs for implementing inclusionary zoning and for new requirements to enumerate homeless people.

1700

I spoke about it in more detail this morning, but I just want to point out again how many pieces of legislation this government is pushing through that add new costs to municipalities. If you just look at the bills that we are dealing with right now, there were new costs for municipalities in Bill 68, which we debated this morning, new costs in this bill, and new costs under Bill 70, which is in committee for clause-by-clause consideration today.

I talked earlier about the mistakes that happen when governments try to force legislation through too quickly. In their rush to dump these additional responsibilities on to municipalities, the government accidentally deleted the sections of the bill which gave the minister responsibility for residential rental property standards in unorganized territories. Since there is no municipal government there to dump the responsibility on, it means that currently no one is responsible for these areas. We put forward an amendment that would have fixed the problem, but the government voted it down.

In the entire session of clause-by-clause, the only non-government amendment that the Liberal members of the committee accepted was one to change a written notice requirement from 10 days to 30 days; that was right near the first of the thing. I was hoping for a better day when they were actually going to improve an amendment from what we had heard from the committee and that was asked for by AMO. They changed it from 10 days' notice to 30 days' notice.

The government voted down amendments requested by AMO, amendments requested by non-profit housing providers, amendments requested by builders and amendments requested by tenant groups. The government blocked amendments that would have stopped the misuse of social housing money, resulting in more affordable housing units being built. They stopped amendments that were based on research from inclusionary zoning policies across the United States.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear this is no longer a government that wants to have a conversation and listen to people. It is a government that is trying to force their agenda on others, just like their secret agenda to force inclusionary zoning on municipalities. They are more concerned about getting legislation through than getting it right.

We, as MPPs, deserve better. The people of Ontario deserve better. The people who are in danger of losing their homes because of their hydro bills deserve better. And the 171,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing definitely deserve better.

In two or three more days, the government will hold a press conference and boast about all the legislation they got through this session. But the way they did it, it shouldn't make them proud.

When you have to limit the ability of the impacted stakeholders to have meaningful input into the bill, it shouldn't make you proud.

When the 171,000 families waiting for affordable housing would never even have the opportunity to learn that the hearings were happening, let alone the ability to come here and tell the government that they wanted housing money to be used more effectively, it should not have made you proud.

When you have to limit the ability of MPPs to discuss amendments and work together to make legislation better, it shouldn't make you proud.

When you have to move unanimous consent to allow a bill to be debated before it is reprinted—the standing orders specifically state:

"Amended bill reprinted

"(b) When a bill has been amended in any committee it shall be reprinted as the Clerk of the House directs, amendments being indicated, and shall not be further proceeded with until it has been reprinted and marked REPRINTED on the Orders and Notices paper."

Mr. Speaker, when you ask MPPs to debate and vote on bills before they even have the ability to read the draft Hansard, it shouldn't make you proud.

When a situation caused by hydro prices is so dire that housing programs are running out of money, people can't

afford groceries and children are going without presents this Christmas, it shouldn't make you proud.

This morning at the greenbelt municipal leaders' breakfast, several speakers said that 2016 was not a good year. The 45,000 families added to the waiting list since 2003 might agree with them, especially the seniors who are now waiting 4.4 years for affordable housing.

I hope that in 2017, we will see this government do better. The people of Ontario deserve it, and so do those 171,000 families who are still waiting for affordable housing. Those 171,000 families all deserve a minister who is willing to come to the committee and talk about this legislation and to make sure that it would work and provide them with the housing they need. The government members on the committee claimed there was no precedent for a minister to come to committee and speak to the bill they introduced, so I want to share a few of those examples of ministers who were willing to come to the committee.

David Young, Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs, appeared January 20, 2001, to speak to Bill 155.

Al Palladini, on June 17, 1997, spoke at the committee on social policy on Bill 138.

Noble Villeneuve, Minister of Agriculture and Food and minister responsible for francophone affairs, appeared before committee on February 17, 1998.

Robert W. Runciman, now Senator Runciman, as Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, appeared before committee on April 7, 1997, to speak to Bill 84, the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

Brian Coburn, Minister of Agriculture and Food, appeared before committee on September 5, 2001, to speak to Bill 81, an act to provide standards with respect to the management of materials containing nutrients.

Laurel Broten, Minister of the Environment, appeared before the social policy committee on August 21, 2006, to speak to Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts.

Sandra Pupatello, Minister of Education, appeared before the social policy committee on May 8, 2006, to speak to Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education.

Minister John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, appeared before the general government committee on April 26, 2006, to speak to Bill 53, the Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act.

Jim Watson, Minister of Consumer and Business Services, appeared before the general government committee on December 1, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I could continue for much longer if the government hadn't limited debate on this bill, but I just want to tell the government that the fact that they don't want to have conversations and the fact that your ministers don't want to answer questions is not going to stop members on this side from wanting to do their job

properly for the people of Ontario. It won't stop me from standing up for the people who are in danger of losing their homes due to hydro and other policies of this government. It isn't going to stop me from standing up for those who are being impacted by the waste and misuse of social housing money.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the time this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I want to start off by talking about inclusionary zoning, because, of course, it's near and dear to my heart. My office worked on inclusionary zoning for eight years. We tabled that bill five times, and it wasn't just about me. It was about my entire office—I have to say all women worked on that bill. We did a huge amount of outreach. We talked to city councils across the province. Many of them passed resolutions—including the city of Toronto, under David Miller in the day—to support inclusionary zoning back then.

It passed second reading once. I have to say that the former Minister of Housing was extremely gracious. When he had the press conference announcing this bill, he invited me to it and gave me a shout-out. It was very similar, I think, to when I worked on PTSD. The Minister of Labour, again, gave me a shout-out when he, as the government, brought it in.

We labour in opposition here, Mr. Speaker. The government gets its way, the opposition has its say, but occasionally the government does what we consider to be the right thing and they bring in something that originated over here. All we ask—it's not too much to ask at this time of year, a time of generosity—is that we get a little shout-out, a little thank you, and a thank you for the people in our offices who work so hard on this.

Anyway, I want to thank the member from Oxford for acknowledging that this bill originated in our office, and I want to caution the Minister of Housing: Really, to be gracious in this place, acknowledge the work of others. So let's talk about some of the work of others.

I'm going to start with my own story, because I was a homeless teen for a while. I left home at 15. I have often told a story, both in the pulpit and out of the pulpit, that I slept at Queen's Park in the summer—actually, just outside my current office. I can see where I used to sleep.

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you. It's more comfortable inside than outside, I have to say.

But back in the day, what they then called student welfare, because I did receive it, allowed me to go to high school, get a basement apartment, buy books, do what I needed to do to get into a community college—the first one back then, Centennial—and then get from there into university.

So the social assistance system of Ontario worked for me, but I have to say the social assistance system of Ontario would not work for someone like me now. If you are getting the base rate of welfare, there is no way you would be able to rent even a basement apartment in Toronto.

1710

So do we need inclusionary zoning? Absolutely; we do. In fact, this is such a useful tool that it's probably the only way that a lot of American jurisdictions provide affordable housing at all, because they certainly don't have money in their state budgets for it. So what they do is bring in inclusionary zoning. Their municipalities do it. Again, it's asking developers to pay their fair share—and that is not necessarily a new park or a new fountain, but something the community desperately needs, and that's housing.

We reckon that had my bill passed eight years ago and we had, say, 10% inclusionary zoning requirements in the province of Ontario, we would now have at least 40,000 new units of affordable housing. When you consider that there are about 171,000 people in Ontario on affordable housing lists and the wait is about eight years—in Toronto, about half of that, about 80,000 people, the wait being 10 to 12 years—that would have gone a long way, without one tax dollar being spent, to combat the problem of homelessness. It certainly would have helped me back in the day, but so would have a robust social service system.

Remember, the United Nations has called housing a human right. In fact, I tabled a bill, with Cathy Crowe in attendance, demanding that this House name housing as a human right. The government was not interested in passing that. Had they passed that, that would have given a lot of housing advocates a chance to take them to court and to demand housing as a human right. Of course, they didn't want that—because housing is not a human right in the province of Ontario, even with the passage of this bill.

I want to say I'm going to be sharing my time with a man who has done a great deal on the housing file, and who is now our housing critic, from Windsor—Tecumseh. He's going to be taking half of this time, as well.

This government brags that it has put \$4 billion into the housing file since 2003. Actually, when you look at the overall budget of the Ontario government, at about \$120 billion a year—over what will be 15 years by the time of the next election—about an eighth of 1% is what has been spent on housing. That is completely and utterly shameful and absolutely below par of what any housing advocate has asked for.

If we remember, 18 years ago it was declared that we had a national disaster in Toronto: homelessness. Sadly, 18 years later the national disaster has become the new normal. It's now normal in Toronto to step over people sleeping in the streets. It's now normal in Toronto to have people who can barely pay their rent.

I have had a number of constituents talking to me about the new rental scheme in Toronto. To talk to the idea of the moving rental benefit—I have to say, I don't know where it's going to move you to in the city of Toronto. Even those who don't need help in getting a rental unit have a difficult time renting a unit in the city of Toronto right now. I've heard of bidding wars on apartments. I've heard of landlords demanding credit

information to the degree that it eliminates 50% of the applicants for their units. They can do this because we don't have enough rental units. That, of course, is part of the problem here too, and part of the problem that we hope inclusionary zoning goes toward fixing.

I'm pleased that the government has met us at least halfway on section 37. When we met with Pam McConnell, deputy mayor of Toronto—and I've talked to a number of Toronto councillors, like Mike Layton, Joe Cressy and others—this was something that they were looking for: some flexibility in being able to apply what this bill will give them in the way of tools.

Remember, it's a very simple thing. It really just takes it out of the hands of the OMB. Again, we've asked for OMB reform. With this bill, a developer would not be able to override the city council and go to the OMB and say, "I don't want to put in affordable housing." The city can require them to do that. That's a good thing, but we need so much more.

It was very right of the co-ops to come and testify at the committee, because co-ops, of course, have provided a lot of affordable housing in our communities. But again, there are not enough co-ops. We had David Crombie, a Conservative mayor of Toronto, come and talk about the St. Lawrence Market redevelopment, which is still, from the 1970s, the gold standard of housing development. Regent Park comes close, but we haven't had anything like it since then. You've got TCHC housing, you've got co-op housing and you've got market housing: That's what inclusionary zoning will look like in practice, and as David said, "It all started with a co-op."

There are some scary things in this bill, too. We're scared about what is going to happen to Toronto Community Housing. We're scared about that. It's desperately in need of repair; in fact, it's in need of more repair than the federal government has talked about, in terms of grants for Ontario. Toronto Community Housing would eat up all that and more. That's how much they need in terms of investment, and that's sad. We are concerned that this is the thin edge of the wedge to privatizing some of those units. We've seen what happens to privatized subsidized and affordable housing units. We saw this in Margaret Thatcher's England, where she sold off affordable housing units to the residents for a dollar. It sounded great for the residents of the time, but it lost those units for generations thereafter in terms of affordable housing. We do not want to see that happen here. We need to keep our affordable housing units. We just need a whole lot more of them.

Over the years, the NDP have tabled a number of bills. I think in the last election and the election before, we called for 10,000 new built units. We called for more supportive housing. There's a desperate need for supportive housing. That is, again, in very short supply. It's not happening.

I also think of those people who are not on the affordable housing lists, those who are under-housed. That is pandemic in the GTA. Folks who are living with

relatives—I will knock on doors of apartments where there are three families living in a two-bedroom apartment. Recent immigrants, people who are taking shifts now, sleeping and working—that's happening in our city already. They are not showing up on the statistics, which are already horrendous. Again, people have given up on applying because the wait-lists are so long and the affordable housing options so small.

What do we need? Again, in the New Democratic Party, government after government, we've tabled bills for real rent control. That's not vacancy de-control. That's not "when the rent moves out, the rent doubles." That's not real rent control, because what that means is that, again, we lose a privately held, somewhat affordable housing unit from the market. That's what's happening in my riding. We have some 10,000 privately held affordable housing units, but if somebody moves out, the rent doubles and it's gone. Of course, we have many folks working with some of our residents to try to prevent that happening, but it's what they do. It is 50% of what they do at many of our legal clinics: look after demands by tenants just to not be muscled out of their units for one excuse or another. So we need real rent control.

We also need real landlord licensing—another bill that we in the New Democratic Party have tabled. We have many units falling apart in my riding. I showed a CBC reporter a unit that literally had a drain pipe running from a leak in the ceiling into a bucket in the corner. She was a woman in her nineties, and when she complained that there was a leak in the ceiling of her apartment, that's what they came and did. That's unacceptable. The bed-bug fiasco of a few years ago hasn't gone away; we still have bedbugs. But the problem is that the city lacks the tools, again, to go after bad landlords. We need those tools for the city, too.

Of course, we need to fix up our Toronto Community Housing. We need to do the necessary repairs there. We need more of it, but we need to at least fix up the housing stock we've got. Again, there is nothing about that here, and—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I have a point of order. I recognize the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm just hoping, Speaker, that we could do a quorum call.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): A quorum call, please.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Back to the member from Parkdale–High Park to continue debate.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: What I was going to say, Mr. Speaker, is that what we really need as well is federal action on this file. We need a national housing strategy, which, by the way, was a Trudeau promise during the

election. We still haven't seen that yet. We certainly haven't seen the kinds of funds into housing in our city and in our province that were promised during the election campaign federally. But definitely, a federal national housing strategy is necessary. Again, I hope my friends from the Liberal Party are in touch with their federal cousins and are demanding that that happen, because, certainly, the problem before us is going to require a great deal of money.

I want to just end with a story of a young girl who first brought home the issue of homelessness to our community—certainly my church community in Parkdale–High Park. That was a family that lived in the parking lot of our church for many years. They lived in their trailer. The little girl would go to school every day from the trailer and come back. We adopted them as a church family. They became part of the community. We fed them. We looked for housing—or, at least, we tried to help them look for housing. It wasn't so easy. Everybody loved her. And here's the thing, Mr. Speaker: Nobody in her school knew that she was homeless. I know a number of other young students who attend school, and nobody knows they're homeless. Certainly, many of the students who attend our schools are under-housed, and nobody knows. It's really the silent pandemic that's going on in our cities right now.

To finish the story about this little girl: One day, the trailer was gone, and we still do not know what happened to that family. We hope they're okay. We hope they found housing. But also, she left her classroom and, again, the teacher didn't know why and didn't know where she had gone.

This is the face of the current crisis—and it is a crisis, and we need to redefine it as a crisis. We need to bring back the language of this being a national disaster. We need to know that poverty costs us \$5 billion a year. That is what poverty costs us. We need to start looking at this issue of housing, which is the critical solution to poverty. You can't move ahead and you can't get out of poverty if you don't have a place to live.

We need to think as economists, not as bookkeepers. We need to think past the next election. We need to think not in four-year cycles but in decade-long cycles. We need to put some serious money into this issue, which is not in this bill and is not coming from the feds. We need to put in the serious money that we need for this social determinant of health—the critical social determinant of health. It will get people working in the construction trades. It will get people working in the development industry. It will get people working again, building housing, making housing, providing housing. And guess what? It will actually attack that cost—the \$5 billion a year it costs out of pocket to keep people on the streets, because it does. It's way more expensive to keep somebody on the streets than in a unit. That's what it costs us.

More importantly, at this time of year, when we're talking about hope and peace and joy and love, it costs us our souls. It costs us a piece of our soul. There should

never be a place where it's okay to step over someone sleeping in the street. There should never be a place where it's okay to have a child living in a trailer in a parking lot. There should never be a place where three families are living in two bedrooms. That place should not exist, and it should not exist here in one of the wealthiest places on Earth.

So let's make a Christmas commitment to not only do what's necessary in this bill, but also, for the first time ever that I've been in this House, have a real housing commitment, both here and in Ottawa.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the Minister of Housing for giving me the opportunity to speak to this bill again. I want to echo the minister's earlier comments in thanking the members across the floor and also in our caucus for their contributions and their time spent speaking to this bill.

I recognize the member from High Park's efforts in the last few years to bring a lot of attention to this very important issue—and it is a very important issue. I think she is absolutely right: No one in Ontario should have gone through that experience.

Over the past weeks, I've worked closely with the Minister of Housing throughout the standing committee process, where we heard a variety of perspectives on Bill 7, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act. This milestone piece of legislation will help us to make great strides in working toward the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

In my time working at Queen's Park, I have come to understand first-hand the need for every Ontarian to have a stable place to call home. In my riding of Trinity–Spadina, chronic homelessness continues to be an issue, but we are making great strides to combat chronic homelessness and to keep people housed.

As part of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy update, our government has consulted with stakeholders on proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act to address the needs of landlords and tenants more effectively. Our proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Act through Bill 7 would help to clarify the treatment of rent-geared-to-income tenants. More specifically, families and individuals who have paid 12 months of market rent and no longer qualify for rent-geared-to-income will no longer be at risk of eviction. This change would ensure that social housing tenants are not penalized due to positive changes in their household incomes.

Other proposed changes to the act will bring all Ontario municipalities into alignment with respect to enforcing local residential rental maintenance standards. We believe that municipalities are the most appropriate level of government to deliver property- and building-related enforcement. Currently, two thirds of municipalities already do this, either fully or partially, as they have their own property standard bylaws that include residential rental standards. But if Bill 7 is passed, these

changes will lead to more responsive enforcement at the local level, which is consistent with the local enforcement of the building code.

As Minister Ballard mentioned, our government is also working hard to modernize the way that we deliver social housing in this province to improve outcomes for the people who the system is designed to serve. This would also be reflected in the Promoting Affordable Housing Act with our proposed reforms to the Housing Services Act. These proposed amendments to the Housing Services Act represent the first step in modernizing the system to support economic and social inclusion for social housing tenants.

Our changes will help to create a vibrant mixed-income community and encourage a healthy mix of rent-geared-to-income and market rent tenants. By recognizing new, innovative forms of municipal housing assistance and increasing local flexibility to manage housing assets, we will empower service managers to provide assistance in a way that best meets their diverse local needs.

We want to create a better outcome for tenants by ensuring that housing assistance meets their needs in a way that is more equitable, flexible and timely. These changes will provide municipalities with more flexibility in administering and delivering social housing, as well as require local enumeration to count people who are homeless in their communities.

1730

We hope this will lead to more stability and security for service managers, as well as for local housing and not-for-profit co-op housing providers. Our amendments could also help to reduce the wait-list, as people would be able to find and apply for housing that supports their needs more quickly and easily. Counting local homeless populations will provide valuable information about the diverse reality of Ontarians who experience homelessness and inform smart approaches, investments and program design.

Further proposed changes to the Housing Services Act under Bill 7 will also help service managers to more easily manage their housing assets to meet their local needs. These amendments will give service managers the authority to approve the transfer or sale of social housing properties while ensuring that the tenants are advised and consulted on the proposed sale or transfer. This would enhance the ability of service managers to make decisions for generating revenues to reinvest in new social and affordable housing assets, ones that meet housing needs in their community.

Service managers will still be required to meet their service level standards under the Housing Services Act. This means that municipalities need to support a certain number of households in their service area either through rent-geared-to-income units or portable benefit assistance. With this package of changes to the Housing Services Act, we are increasing flexibility and making it easier for municipalities to provide affordable housing in a way that makes sense for their community because

every community is unique and a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't always work.

This legislation we are proposing today, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act, would allow us to take a big step forward in transforming and modernizing our social housing system. These measures, along with the other proposed amendments that Minister Ballard spoke about earlier today, would help us to increase the range of affordable housing options across the province and to ultimately reach our goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

I join Minister Ballard in urging all members of this House to vote for the passing of Bill 7.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We're all wearing white ribbons today and it just dawned on me, with the Montreal massacre 27 years ago, that at this point in time we have more women members in the House than men this afternoon. I think that's commendable.

Let me just say right up front, if I can, Speaker—let me put it on the table—that I think we do a better job of writing legislation in a minority government situation.

Mr. Grant Crack: You've never been in a minority.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I've been here in a minority. Who are you kidding? This isn't my first rodeo.

In a minority situation, the government members doing clause-by-clause have to be more open to suggestions on how a bill could be improved. Our experience yesterday was not the greatest, Speaker, I have to tell you. There were more than 40 amendments put forward, eight of them from the government, and, of course, they all passed. From the opposition, one amendment, from the PCs, changed the wording from 10 days to 30. That was it, of all of the amendments we put forward.

Other than that, despite getting advice from about 30 organizations and individuals, government members on the committee came with their written agenda and were not there to listen to reason or consider amending their proposed legislation whatsoever. The result of Bill 7, as I see it: No one is going to be very happy about it. Few will be able to say, "The government listened to what I had to say."

I get it. I really do. The government doesn't wish to offend the people in the development industry who build houses or condos or apartment buildings. The flip side of that, of course, is that you end up offending the people in need of affordable housing in Ontario.

You don't make friends with the municipal leaders who warned you not to give them a take-it-or-leave-it proposition: either inclusionary zoning or continue on with the option of section 37 benefits, the cash-in-lieu alternative. That was the poison pill in this bill. The developers were taken care of, and it remains to be seen just how many municipal governments will actually opt into the inclusionary zoning aspect of the bill, knowing that they will be limited in their ask for other community benefits.

The first delegation the committee listened to was Councillor Ana Bailão from the city of Toronto. She pulled no punches, saying, "Toronto is in the midst of a housing crisis with a system that is broken."

You may have noticed some of them, Speaker, but there are 5,000 homeless people on any given night in Toronto. The wait-list for social housing has the names of 100,000 people. Toronto provides subsidized housing—90,000 units, but many of them are old and in serious need of repair and renovation. On the other hand, this is a great city. It is like the Energizer bunny: It keeps growing and growing and growing. More than 85,000 new residential units were built between 2011 and 2015. Most of them, as Councillor Bailão put it in her words, "have been in mid-rise and tall buildings in the downtown, centres and avenues."

You may recall last year, Speaker, that Toronto's chief planner, Jennifer Keesmaat, told us on another committee that had inclusionary zoning regulations been adopted a few years ago, we could have had, in Toronto, 12,000 affordable housing units built in the past five years—using that 10% formula of units opened up in buildings of more than 300 units. Just imagine, for a moment, if we could have had that number of new affordable housing units built. We can still do it, but the city of Toronto sees inclusionary zoning differently than the way the province and the development industry see it. Toronto strongly opposed the either/or, take-it-or-leave-it proposal that says, "If you opt in for inclusionary zoning, you can forget about the section 37 benefits, the cash-in-lieu benefits," which the city had been using to improve its neighbourhoods. Toronto councillors see section 37 as an important and effective planning policy tool, which has helped them, for example, gain improvements in daycare spaces, in better neighbourhoods and better parks.

The secured benefits, according to Councillor Bailão, were direct, tangible and responsive to the greater needs of the community. She was offended that Toronto would have to "choose one or the other to create inclusive, complete communities."

I find it interesting that the Liberals have nearly 40 members from the greater Toronto and Hamilton ridings, and yet they don't agree with the stated needs of their municipal representatives. Municipal politicians know the needs of their constituents more so than those of us inside the bubble here at Queen's Park. Municipal politicians see the need every day. One of their priorities is affordable housing, and yet the Wynne Liberals keep dancing around the issue, pretending to listen, but they don't wish to offend their friends in the development industry.

Instead of working with them on partnering possibilities, they open only so many doors as they pretend to build Ontario up. They've pretty well closed the door on inclusionary zoning in Toronto. I believe that most municipal politicians in Ontario would agree that Toronto has unique challenges and unique opportunities. But this either/or option of cash-in-lieu or inclusionary zoning will not be the key to the puzzle of affordable housing

that it could have been. I think some of the Toronto-area Liberal MPPs will pay the political price for that, just as they will with soaring hydro prices.

1740

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, appeared before our committee. I'm not sure if you're aware of it, but when it comes to social housing, affordable housing, the municipal sector in Ontario puts more money into this file than the provincial and federal governments. They have a concern that there would be aspects contained in this bill that will transfer more of the costs of social housing onto their books when, if anything, the province should be shouldering more of a share of that cost.

AMO, for example, does not support or endorse the provincial plan to end its role in enforcing local rental maintenance standards. They see that as disproportionately affecting smaller and rural municipalities. AMO also couldn't understand why the Liberals had dropped that poison pill in there, the either/or of cash-in-lieu or inclusionary zoning.

AMO president Lynn Dollin put it this way: "We do not support the condition that would effectively prohibit municipal governments from being able to gain section 37 benefits on the same lands, buildings or structures as inclusionary zoning. There should not be trade-offs between affordable housing and other community amenities, such as libraries, parks and community spaces."

She went on to say, "We believe that the restrictions on off-site development and payment of cash-in-lieu are not warranted. This will make inclusionary zoning by-laws less feasible. Not all developments are suited for the inclusion of affordable units. Providing payment of cash-in-lieu should be allowed with the condition that funds are invested in affordable housing units elsewhere," but nearby.

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada knows a thing or two about affordable housing. Harvey Cooper, the managing director for the federation's Ontario region, told us that this bill, as it is currently written, is putting inclusionary zoning in competition with section 37, and may prevent some municipalities from adopting inclusionary zoning.

Here's the kicker: According to the experts in the field of co-op housing, "Our experience at the municipal level" is that if it's a battle between parks and housing, "housing rarely wins." What does that tell you, Speaker? What should that be telling the MPPs on the Liberal side of the House, especially those who represent ridings in Toronto? Look over your shoulder. There's a tsunami coming your way: tens of thousands of people, thinking you were actually going to do something about affordable housing, and you didn't.

There will be a price to pay. That's because, as Harvey Cooper says, "A safe, secure home is the foundation on which we build our lives. With an affordable home, we can raise a family. We can find and we can keep work. We can invest in training and hopefully have enough money left over to put food on the table"—not just food, Speaker; healthy food on the table.

Furthermore, current estimates show that 273,000 Ontario households pay more than half of their income on rent, and 42% of renters are in core housing need.

ACORN Canada is a tenants' rights group that has united for justice in social housing. Alejandra Ruiz Vargas and John Anderson told us that the government should think twice about some of the rigidity of the proposed legislation. Never allowing cash-in-lieu they saw as a mistake that needed correction.

They live in social housing. They see the need every day. They saw inclusionary zoning as just one tool, but an important one, because they see the affordable housing crisis in Ontario having disastrous effects on low- to moderate-income families.

Speaker, let me pause for a minute and tell you how we tried at committee earlier to have this bill travel across the province. Of course, the government said no, but we wanted to travel it because the people who came to see us were all from the Toronto area. There are people in the Far North and people across the rest of the province who really didn't even know we were going to be talking about this bill because it was rushed through in such a fashion. Had they known about it and had we had more time to let them know about it—but of course, the committee wouldn't do that. They wouldn't extend the notification period by one day so we could let people across the province know.

But we're talking about affordable housing. The people who want to come to speak to us about the need for affordable housing are the people in need of affordable housing. They live everywhere in this province, especially in the Far North. We thought the committee should take the bill to them so they wouldn't have to come up with the money and pay the expense of coming here on short notice, if they could get a flight, to make their presentation. But no. God bless them, the Liberal members of the committee turned that option down, didn't want to listen to it—no way whatsoever.

We still heard from a lot of tenants' rights people. I'll just read you a few of them, Speaker.

The All IN people: All IN is advocating for inclusive communities where everybody fully belongs. They presented on inclusionary zoning, but they also wanted to make sure the bill included the need for the integration of affordable housing in all neighbourhoods and the need for supportive and other assisted-living housing for persons with special needs. That makes sense to me.

They wanted to ensure the integration of affordable housing in city neighbourhoods so that people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds can live anywhere they choose. "Through integration," the All IN group says, "we reduce ghettoization of the poor, and we promote understanding, empathy, and collaboration, all of which will help us build more inclusive, vibrant, and healthy communities."

The All IN group said the bill could have been amended to include the provision of supportive housing and group homes for people with psychological and developmental, as well as physical, disabilities and

challenges. “Such housing,” according to them, “should be available in every neighbourhood.” It should have been amended to ensure that there were enough homes built that had two and four bedrooms, either sale or rental, to accommodate the needs of larger and multi-generational families.

Their final point, Speaker, that I’ll read to you today: “The province should undertake an education campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of inclusionary zoning, and to encourage the collaboration of residents, businesses, and all levels of government to achieve the goal of affordable housing for all.”

The Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, ACTO, wanted to increase the supply of much-needed affordable housing in Ontario to help healthy, diverse communities by requiring a wider mix of incomes in new developments. They also thought laws could be changed that would help combat the NIMBY—not in my backyard—syndrome, as affordable housing becomes a normal part of new residential developments.

They also didn’t want to eliminate the provision of ministerial approval when transfers result in a loss of social housing units. We tried to get that in there. Believe it or not, the government members said, “Well, we don’t know what a loss is. How do you define a loss?” And they got hung up on the definition of a loss of social housing units. I said, “Do the math.” If you have fewer units than you had before, you’ve lost them; they’re gone. But they wouldn’t include that provision because they thought they would run into a definition on the loss. So they didn’t support the proposed removal of provincial government oversight that could prevent the imprudent selling off of these assets, paid for by the people of Ontario.

This group wanted to “ensure that any portable housing benefit that fulfills service level standards for RGI units provides the same or better level of housing stability as the social housing RGI unit it replaces.” This is the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, Speaker.

They reminded us that “282,000 units of social housing in Ontario represent about 20% of the province’s purpose-built rental housing stock. They are a vital source of affordable housing for some of the lowest-income households as about 200,000 of them have rent-geared-to-income (RGI) subsidies attached” to these units.

The Federation of Metro Tenants’ Associations: “Currently in Ontario, over 190,000 people are on the housing wait-list.” They wanted to us eliminate that

poison pill I’ve talked about, that either/or: inclusionary zoning or the section 37 benefits. They say—as did Harvey Cooper—when you get into a fight between inclusionary zoning and section 37 benefits, when they talked to the city councillors in Toronto, the councillors told them that section 37 will win out every time. This could render this piece of legislation—in their quotations—“dead on arrival.”

They didn’t want to eliminate ministerial approval when transfers result in a loss of social housing units. We talked about that. We tried to get it in there, but the Liberals wouldn’t allow it.

These people get calls from tenants every day—outside of Toronto, even. They can only offer minimal support outside of Toronto, because there is no support line for tenants outside of Toronto, so they refer them to the local Rental Housing Enforcement Unit. They say not to let the province take that away and download that onto municipalities: “Ending provincial inspections and enforcement of minimum standards will not help tenants or provide any benefit to the housing stock. In fact, it makes no sense that this is included in a bill to promote affordable housing. Many of the municipalities without adequate property standards bylaws do not have the resources and/or staff to take on the duties currently performed by the ministry.”

Speaker, that was the same message we heard from AMO president Lynn Dollin. She said, “Look, don’t download any stuff onto us. We’re trying to get away from the downloading, and you’re talking about making our local people, our municipal people start enforcing maintenance standards at the local level. We don’t have the resources for that.”

I thank you for your time this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 24, 2016, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Ballard has moved third reading of Bill 7, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts with respect to housing and planning. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing the time is close to 6 o’clock, this House now stands adjourned until 9 o’clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1754.

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
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Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Associate Minister of Education (Early Years and Child Care) / Ministre associée de l'Éducation (Petite enfance et Garde d'enfants)
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Han Dong
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
Arthur Potts, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Yvan Baker, Mike Colle
Grant Crack, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Jim McDonell, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
James J. Bradley, Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Wayne Gates, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Randy Hillier
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qaadri, Laurie Scott
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
James J. Bradley, Steve Clark
Vic Dhillon, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Arthur Potts
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioe Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Ted McMeekin, Mario Sergio
Bill Walker, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch